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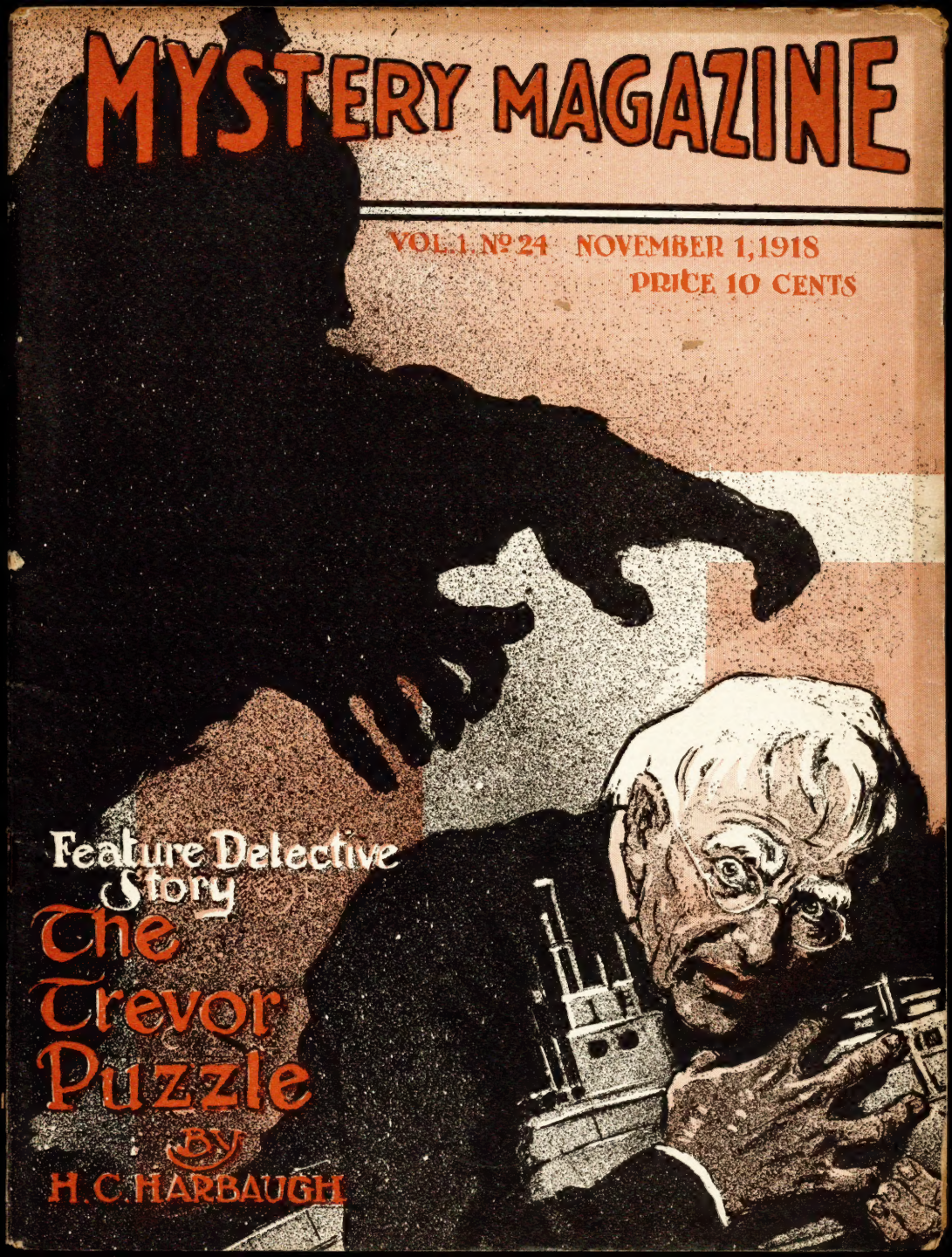
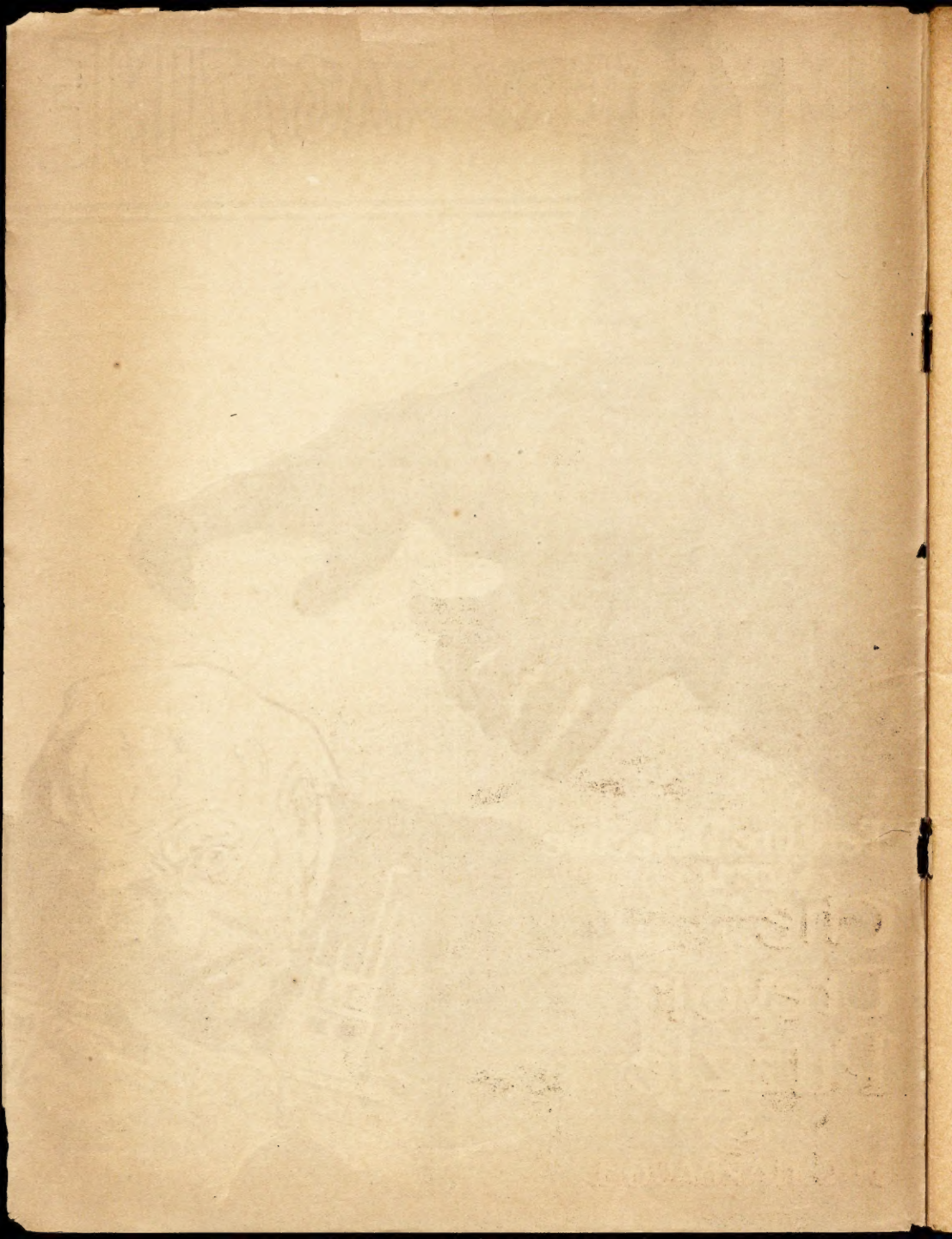


Feature Detective Story

The Trevor Puzzle

By H. C. HARBAUGH



"THE TRAIL OF ROSES," by Edmund Condon, Is Our Next Feature Story. Watch For It!

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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THE TREVOR PUZZLE

A MYSTERY DETECTIVE STORY

By T. C. HARBAUGH

CHAPTER ONE

WHEN Sebastian Trevor took it into his head to disappear, or was the act wholly his own? a great many people looked at one another in amazement. He was a man of great wealth and importance, a real genius, somewhat of a recluse with a faculty for invention which had commended him to the government. His city residence was really a workshop, as were his two country resorts to which he sometimes repaired whenever he wanted to get away from the turmoil of the town.

I had never met the man personally, and when I was summoned to take his trail I fancied that it would not be a difficult task. How could such a man as Sebastian Trevor vanish? He was known in every walk in life, had prominence that lifted him above his fellow-man, and the war had brought him forward in a degree that still further enhanced the country's knowledge of him.

"I fancy you will have little difficulty in solving this mystery," said the chief to me as I sat in his office listening to all he knew of the case. "We don't know much. Ten days have now elapsed and the matter is as obscured as ever. The government has been waiting on him to present the model of his last invention, but neither the man nor the machine is forthcoming. His niece and ward has been here repeatedly, but she has nothing new. That is all; the trail is yours. Go to it."

I resolved first to begin at the beginning, and therefore I presented myself at the door of the Trevor city home on Albert avenue and was admitted by a comely maid.

"Miss Trevor?" I said, at the same time extending my card, and was taken into the presence of a young girl in a morning gown reclining languidly in a Morris-chair.

Honore Trevor, I must say, did not impress me as a beauty, but when she spoke I was conscious of a fascination that completely carried me away.

"I am glad you have come, though I dislike publicity," she began. "I believe uncle's vanishment is not the mystery the officials are making of it. He is a peculiar man and a cripple. Did you know that? His left hand was withered from his birth, and it has rendered him supersensitive. He disappeared on the night of the tenth, leaving no clue to his present whereabouts. Of course we are anxious, and consequently a little fearsome. But let us begin at the beginning, and it shall be right in his workshop."

I was escorted to an upper room and into a laboratory which was fitted up without regard to means. Miss Trevor waved her hand around the room and then sat down.

"He was working on a strange machine which, when completed, he intended to present to the government. He kept his secrets to himself, but now and then he let out a few sentences which led me to believe that his invention was to hasten the end of the war. That is as far as he ever went, and I did not press him for further information. On the night of his disappearance I heard him in this room till a late hour and then silence. I retired to my own room and fell asleep. I fancied I heard a car outside; but that may have been mere fancy. We hear so many things in a subconscious state, therefore when he did not come down to breakfast we thought nothing of it. But as days went on and the mystery deepened we apprehended trouble, and at last, from the insistent importunities of the officials, we were forced to disclose the situation.

"He had been in the habit of working till late and sometimes all night. As a side diversion he had lately taken up the occult under the direction of one Saidi Si, a strange-looking Hindu who came here now and then to instruct him in the mysteries of the cult. This man is a compound of the secretive and the demon habits of his kind, and I shuddered whenever I came in contact with him. Where he lives I have no idea, nor have I any information that will enable you to locate him. That he lives in the city I am certain. When he was here last he met me in the lower corridor, and when he fixed his sloe-black eyes upon me I felt my blood tingle—yes, actually tingle in my veins. He made a subtle pass with his dark hands and I almost reeled against the wall and was glad when he was gone. This was the last time I encountered Saidi Si, and that was the night before the last time I saw my uncle."

Miss Trevor fell back in her chair and heaved a breath of relief.

"This is more than I have told any one else," she continued, freshening up. "The police have been here, but I do not fancy them; you come from a place that has more authority than the bureau, and that is why I have been more communicative. The laboratory is at your service for inspection, though I fear Uncle Sebastian has left nothing that will reward you."

Miss Trevor withdrew and left me alone. Her last words prepared me for failure, and for a while I sat in my chair and looked around.

There seemed nothing that would afford a clue to the mystery.

I went around the room, looking here and there, touching several things with careful hands and disturbing nothing.

When I went downstairs I found a young girl, a maid, at her ordinary work. She stopped a moment and gave me an inquisitive stare, quite in keeping with the habits of house servants.

I backed against the wall to get out of the way of her broom and looked her over from head to foot. She was a trim maid with black eyes and a cool air which told me that she was able to give as good as she got. But at the same time, despite her morning duties, I saw that she was watching me with the subtlety of one above her position.

"You have been here for some time?" I said, half carelessly. "What is your name?"

"Thaddora," she answered with a contemptuous curl of the lip.

"That means much or little," I answered with a smile.

"It means the truth."

"What did you see the night of the tenth?"

The broom came to a sudden halt, and the girl stood erect and eyed me almost savagely.

"What if I should turn questioner?" she snapped. "You have seen my mistress, have you not?"

"Yes."

"Well, is not that sufficient? I was asleep that night of the tenth. I sleep on the third floor. I don't know anything about my master. His goings and comings are not my affairs." And there I was.

Balked by a girl, I was forced to admit my chagrin.

At this moment I heard a footstep in the hall and, to my relief, Miss Trevor appeared.

She held the door open for me and followed me out upon the steps.

"I neglected to acquaint you with uncle's country resorts," she said, lowering her voice. "One, and the nearest to the city, is across the river. He calls it Edgecliff. I don't think it will be difficult to find. I have never visited it myself. The other is down by the sea, but he hasn't visited it of late. But I presume the officers have scoured both places and there is nothing left for you. Edgecliff is situated in a tangle of briers, as he once laughingly told me—a bad place for young ladies in city dresses. That is all I have to say at present. I wish you success," and with this I parted with her.

To say the least, I was disappointed with my initial hunt and not a little chagrined over my encounter with the maid.

Back once more in my lodgings, I took up the situation and mapped out the first course.

Hardly had I finished ere I was called by the chief who was nervously anxious to learn what I had discovered.

"We have information that Sebastian Trevor left the city the night of the tenth," said he over the line. "He was seen to cross the river alone, probably to visit his country resort called Edgecliff. Had a small grip and looked worried. I think you had better take the trail from there."

This was in accordance with the plan I had formed and I lost no time.

Edgecliff, as I soon discovered, was a place at the terminus of a little poorly built railway. It had no particular significance in the business or financial world, and but a bare mention on the map. It was an out-of-the-way spot, deep in the wild tangle of the rural world, about as inviting as the jungles of Africa.

Whatever had possessed Sebastian Trevor to call his country resort after the name of the poor station was beyond my comprehension. But putting the idea aside, I booked myself for Edgecliff and thus entered upon the most exciting mystery chase of my life.

I fortunately had no fellow-travelers, so I lounged back in the uncomfortable seat at my disposal, and the slouchy conductor who took my ticket looked at me and grunted:

"You will find Edgecliff in bed, what there is of it. And it promises to be a rough night."

"So much the better, perhaps," said I. "The darker the night the more to my liking," and slid the deeper into my seat as I curled up for my jaunt.

The bouncing over the poor roadbed did not arouse me, but the stentorious voice of the grimy official as he called out "Edgecliff" did.

I went to the forward end of the coach and looked out. Some pattering drops of rain were falling; the wind had sprung up, all evidence that I was to have a beastly reception. As I sprang down from the steps I heard a hound baying in the woods already near at hand, and then I caught sight of something human at my elbow.

CHAPTER TWO

I ACTED upon my first impulse, which was to recoil from the apparition, but a moment later got my nerves. He was not a person to daunt one of my build, but a thin, cadaverous native with the tang of the locality about him, and the moment he spoke I laughed to myself. Surely

this individual was nothing to be afraid of, and when I addressed him he seemed to shrink from me.

"A rough night, stranger," he replied with a monotonous drawl. "Edgecliff has gone to bed."

"All but yourself, it seems. How far am I from the house in the woods?"

"It's right over there, but——"

"Well?" I interrupted.

"It's empty just now. No one to home."

He was looking at me through a pair of sea-green eyes after the manner of the ferret, shrugging his sloping shoulders the while in a manner I did not like.

I fell back and made out to move away. He came after me half-savagely, but as if he thought better of the movement, seeing my physique, stopped short and said apologetically:

"I did not know you were going over to Edgecliff. Good luck to you," and turned abruptly away.

I set out in the direction indicated by his look and, after stumbling through a mass of moistened foliage, come out into a little opening where the light was better. Suddenly there loomed up before me a house of fair proportions out of keeping with the rest of the half-darkened landscape. I made out the semblance of the front porch and then half a dozen closed shutters, all of which indicated vacancy if not mystery.

My footsteps sounded upon the boards like the reports of firearms, and I rested in the shelter a few moments. Then I tried the front door only to find it locked, twisting the knob in my endeavors to make sure of the situation and at last desisting.

Not to be baffled, I tried a shutter with better results, for it yielded, and I entered the house by the window. In a moment I found myself amid the darkness of Egyptian caverns, not knowing for a moment which way to turn, but a match suddenly revealed my surroundings. The room which I had invaded was large and well kept; indeed, it suggested a careful caretaker, for I noticed that the floor had been neatly swept and the furniture dusted. Before my lucifer went out I observed a table in the middle of the apartment with a Morris-chair alongside of it. Everything suggested recent occupancy, and I did not doubt that some one had been there but a short time prior to my coming.

Finding the chair in the darkness I threw myself into it and, taking out a revolver, laid it within reach upon the table. I heard the rain pattering outside, and the rising wind which drove the gusts against the panes. It was an uncanny place heightened by the hour, which was nearly midnight, and by the silence, which was ghostly.

All at once the wind lulled and the rain seemed to cease; it no longer pattered on the window. Suddenly I heard a noise which was not of the elements. A key turned in the lock which had resisted my efforts, and a rush of air told me that the door had been pushed ajar.

I was confident that I was not the sole occupant of the house.

The presence of the unknown sent through my veins a chill which I could not shake off. I realized there was but a brief space between me and the mysterious, a span as it were between life and death, for what manner of being had entered the room I could only conjecture. That it was no friendly intruder I felt certain; that it had followed me to the house was more than the truth, and as my brain whirled I decided the time had come to act.

With a match in one hand and a revolver in the other I suddenly dispelled the gloom. As the little flame shot into being I recoiled in the chair, for there stood before me the incarnation of villainy and mystery.

It was long, sinuous and dark-faced. The head was surmounted by a turban, the torso protected by a garment difficult of description, and the lower limbs almost bare. The devilish face was set with eyes that fairly snapped, deep, serpent orbs that seemed virtually alive in their heartlessness, and a pair of long, agile hands, fakir-like in their shape and cruelty.

This was the being my match revealed.

The instant the eyes glistened in the light I threw the flame to the floor and raised the weapon.

But with all my agility I was not quick enough.

The thing had the spring of the cobra or the rattlesnake and it fell upon me like a thunderbolt, knocking the revolver from my grasp and overturning the chair. We went to the floor together, writhing and battling with the fury of mortal foes. I felt the naked arms about my neck and knew that the long hands were wrestling for my weazen.

I felt the fetid breath of the dark monster at my throat; despite the darkness I thought I could see the devilish eyes, and I discovered that, notwithstanding my muscle, I was fast being overcome.

I could not cope with the thing; as yet I had not thought of calling it human, and I felt that I was in its power.

When I came back to life I was bound in the chair, which had been righted, and the room swam in light.

Four other dark-faced men stood over me. All were alike as peas in build and appearance. The beady eyes of each glinted with heathenish victory, and the stars set in the turbans seemed alive.

They chattered in an unknown tongue, which I knew from the sound was Indian, and regarded me with all the malice of the Orient for daring to intrude into the mystery of Trevor's disappearance.

I could only look out of my bonds and stare at the hellish quartet.

That I was doomed I could read by their eyes. But what my doom was to be I could only conjecture. The leathery cords cut me to the veins, and I could not move a single muscle.

The rain began again. I heard it beat against the house with more vehemence than before, but my captors did not heed.

Presently one of the men leaned forward, leering into my face with all the devilishness of a fiend from the bottomless pit.

"Sahib a fool," said he. "Sahib come into the den of the serpent."

I was aware of this; it did not take his words to convince that he spoke the ghastly truth.

I was left alone in the chair while the dark men withdrew to consult, as I thought, upon my fate.

They closed the door behind them, and as the light flickered on the wall it called up ghosts that danced and bowed to me, the victim of thuggery.

Then I thought of Saidi Si, Sebastian Trevor's teacher of the occult. I had fallen into the hands of the men who probably were responsible for the inventor's disappearance; I had struck the right trail to my own undoing!

I meditated in silence till the door was suddenly opened and my captors re-entered the room. I read death in their cobra orbs as they came forward with the swinging motion of their people, glowering at me angrily.

"Sahib comes, Sahib goes!" said the spokesman, laying his soft, silken hand on my shoulder, a light touch but which made me wince.

Swift hands untied the knots which bound me to the chair and I was lifted bodily from its depths. How strong those sinuous devils were! How cold the touch of their hands! Their eyes seemed to burn their way into my flesh.

Between them I was carried from the room and up a staircase upon the carpet of which their sandaled feet made no noise. The silence was oppressive; the only light which the head man carried intensified the scene.

Of the interior of the house in the wood I knew nothing; Sebastian Trevor had built it to suit his unique purposes, but the dark men were evidently familiar with it.

At last a door was opened and I was borne into an apartment, the like of which I had never seen before.

It was high-ceiled and almost bare of furniture. It was not this absence that startled me. At one end of the room was a table upon which sat three vases. A cord united them, a darkish cord of the diameter of a pencil.

I was borne to this table and strapped down upon it amid intensive silence and by agile hands.

When the bondage was complete all the dark men withdrew and left me alone with the chief.

"Sahib comes, Sahib goes. Out of the Unknown he comes, into the Unknown he goes!"

The tones drifted off into silence. As the speaker fell back he stretched forth a dark hand and lit a match. The little flame touched the cords that united the vases and a spark flashed up.

I saw all now. The doom which had been decreed for me rushed through my brain. I had read of the death tortures of India and of one called the Perfumed Cord.

Already I could inhale the odor of the cord. As it goes from vase to vase it exhales different odors which unite in the third receptacle, and the victim dies of poisonous gases. A pleasant death, a dreamless sleep, the end of earth!

I caught the glint of the dark eyes of the chief of the deadly cult. I thought again of Saidi Si and of Sebastian Trevor, of his niece, and last, but not least, of the maid Thaddora, and then the door was shut and I was alone with—Doom!

CHAPTER THREE

THOUGH the door was pulled to cautiously, the slight noise was vibrant in my ears, and I turned to the burning cord. How long would it last? That it was the Perfumed Death of India I did not doubt, and then I could fancy the dark men beyond the portal, gloating over their fiendish work.

Was this to be the end of the Trevor mystery? Had they taken possession of Edgecliff, turning it into an execution chamber, the mysteries of which no man was destined to explain? It was vain to speculate in view of certain doom; vain to dream of final victory. Some time lapsed ere anything called my attention from the sputtering. fuse.

Then I heard the door pulled ajar. I could not raise my head for the cords that crossed my throat; but I realized that I was not the sole occupant of the place. Gliding feet came forward; they stopped alongside the table, and I looked up into a face which I had not forgotten.

The cadaverous man whom I had encountered, when I alighted from the train which brought me to the station, stood beside me, a grim smile upon the sallow face, and a little laugh blubbering upon his lips.

"They caught you, eh?" the man simpered. "The black little rats! And what is this?" He leaned toward the fuse and deliberately snuffed it out of existence. "That's a funny contrivance, don't you think; but it's just like 'em."

"Where are they?" I eagerly queried.

"They made off single file. They were like ghosts, and I shivered as they went by."

I was on my feet now, clinching the hands of my rescuer, but not without a questioning glance at the end of the death cord as it dangled from the bowl of the third vase.

"I'm Orson Tang," the fellow went on. "I've been watching the little men for days. First one came, and then another. They're all alike as peas. Were you following them?"

"No, I came down on another mission. What has become of Sebastion Trevor?"

He shook his head.

"If you mean the man who used to come here once in a while, I don't know. He hasn't been here for weeks."

"But you've seen him?"

"Yes, the man with the funny hand, a hand not like other men's claws. But it could grasp a thing like hooks of steel."

"That withered hand?"

"Sure! Haven't I seen it do so? Let me tell you something, something I saw with my own eyes."

"Go on."

"One night he came down here alone, as usual. I have a curiosity like other humans. I watched him. So did another person, but he don't do it any more. This man stole upon the Withered Hand and then something happened. It was in the room downstairs. Mr. Withered Hand saw him by his shadow on the wall, and quick as a cat he was upon him. He shot out the bad hand and clutched his throat. Mind you, I say it was the bad hand, for I saw it as plain as day. Back against the wall he bore him without a word, tiger-like, and held him there till his face got as black as ink, for I saw it all, all in a minute. When Withered Hand let loose the fellow slipped to the floor—that was all."

I said nothing, waiting for the finish.

"When Withered Hand fell back, his face was white, but presently he stooped over the man, and picked him up, with the strength of an ox. He carried him from the room, but I did not follow. After ten minutes he came back, but he was alone. There was a devilish glitter in his eyes. He could not have gone out of the house. Let us go and see."

Together we left the room. The man had eyes like the night prowling panther; he led the way from corridor to corridor, stopped now and then to open a door and peer into some room which his cat-like eyes seem to search, only to be disappointed.

"I'll have to give it up," said he at last, whirling upon me. "I don't know what became of the trailer."

"Did Withered Hand always come here alone?" I ventured.

"Always. But he had some one at his heels every now and then. The girl——"

I gasped expectantly at the word.

"The girl?" I echoed. "What girl?"

"You'll have to take another tack and ask me something easy," grinned Orson Tang. "It's all mystery to me. The little dark men, too. I fancy you could never hold one of them, they'd slip out of your hands like eels."

We were down in the lower room once more and with the light turned low on the oval table. The storm cloud had passed over, and after the storm of elemental passion the moon was in the sky again.

"What did Withered Hand work at when he came down here?" Orsong Tang suddenly asked.

"What did you see?" I countered.

"Much that I didn't understand," he replied. "But he kept busy while he was here. There's a secret place in the wall of this room. Maybe we can find it."

He went over to a certain spot and began to sound the wall; he drummed and punched with his long fingers.

"It was easy for Withered Hand to find the secret, for he knew," he said, looking over his sloping shoulder. "But it's all dark to me, though I watched him time and time again. Ah, by Jove! I've found it," and a door slid back from his hand, revealing an aperture from which the man recoiled with a laugh of victory.

With a bound I was at his side and was peering into the opening as if the jewels of the rajahs lay before me. Instead of such a "find," a most curious model was exposed, a miniature submarine, so exquisitely finished that I gave an ejaculation of wonder. But I saw at once that it was different.

"He must have made it!" exclaimed Orson Tang. "This is Withered Hand's work."

There was no room for doubt; I was in another of Sebastian Trevor's workshops, and breathlessly I gazed at the undersea model.

"The little dark men must have missed this," my companion said, calling me back to life, as it were. "Withered Hand was too sharp for the whole gang."

Suddenly, as if propelled by some invisible mechanism, the panel slid back to its place, leaving the wall blank as before.

"You're not going back to-night?" Orson Tang asked. "The dark men may be on the watch."

"No," said I. "I am going to remain in this house till morning."

The man gasped.

"It's risky," he protested. "They may return."

I laid my hand on the revolver with a quick gesture which told him I was not defenseless, whereat he smiled.

"Well, I wish you luck if you're going to take the chance," and he held out his hand at parting.

Once more I was alone in that abode of mystery, alone with Trevor's secret, over which I would stand guard till dawn.

I extinguished the light, and the room again swam in gloom.

The silence was ghostly in the extreme, the wind, again rising, shook the branches that touched Edgecliff, and I found the Morris-chair and enconsed myself in it. I had enough to keep me severely awake; the night had been full of danger and peril, the trail of Sebastian Trevor was just beginning, and I tried to think it out to the end.

I did not doubt that Orson Tang had not gone far; outside somewhere he stood guard, whether to protect my person, or to get another glimpse of the dark men for his own edification I did not know. He was a strange man; under the outer skin he was white, after all.

I was suddenly aroused from a doze by the shriek of a locomotive. The last train from the city was coming into Edgecliff station, but as the sound died away I fell back into the old doze.

Surely no one would invade the premises any more that night; the four Hindus, having left me to the tender mercies of the Perfumed Death, would return to their master, whom I doubted not was Saidi Si, with their ghastly report, for I reckoned I had passed from mortal ken and would no more cross their trail.

Suddenly I felt a puff of air on my face. It was enough to rouse me. That the door had opened was the first thought that passed through my mind.

Reaching out my hand, I clutched the weapon I had placed on the table and drew it toward me.

A footfall entered the chamber, slight but plainly heard, and as I looked forward something rose between me and the stars of early morning, something human in shape, but spectral and fearsome.

It came toward me, almost brushing my body subtilely after the manner of specters that walk only by night.

I wanted to thrust out a hand and check the movement, but I refrained. The thing might not be flesh and blood; after all it might be but a phantasm of the imagination.

It passed me by a swift movement in which I thought I heard a long-drawn breath.

In another second a little light leaped into being, the glare of an electric flash-light, and as my morning visitor stood revealed I sprang from my chair.

I stood face to face with Thaddora, Honore Trevor's maid!

The flash-light fell to the floor as her shriek rang through the room.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE white-faced maid stood against the wall looking at me as if I were a specter from the Unknown. She was quivering from head to foot, and her bulging eyes seemed about to leap from their sockets. Never before had I seen such a picture of fright and trepidation.

Fearing that she would take another tack and fly, I shot forth my hand to grasp her, but as quick as thought she pulled herself together, edging along the wall with the flash-light ablaze at her feet, and was gone.

Out into the gleam of the morning stars she went, and I fancied I could hear her flying footsteps as they lengthened the distance between the station and the house. That she had come to Edgecliff for a purpose connected with the mystery of Sebastian Trevor was the one thought that now obsessed me. I was not going to let her off so easily. She could not get back to the city by car that night; she must hide somewhere, and her hiding-place, if already selected, must be found.

Plunging down the driveway, if the narrow cleared path may be called such, I found myself some distance from the house after a few moments. The rain had moistened everything, the morning air was cool, and in the East the first arrows of dawn were abroad.

I was brought up suddenly in my headlong flight by an unseen vine which caused me to lose my balance, and I measured my length on the ground.

It was but a momentary detention, but it cost me dearly in the light of future events, as will be seen. The silence which followed my tumble was not broken by a single sound.

The little collection of houses which went by the name of Edgecliff greeted my baffled senses, and when I reached them for the first time I paused. The girl had escaped, her doe-like swiftness had proved too much for me, and I checked my speed. I had to acknowledge my discomfiture.

There was nothing to do now but to give up the pursuit, and this I did with ill grace. But I was satisfied that Thaddora was lurking somewhere just beyond my hands, perhaps watching me from an unseen covert, and this was the thought that nettled me almost beyond endurance.

The light broadened and I stood under the porch of a house nursing my chagrin with no good humor.

All at once I caught sight of a familiar figure slouching along the single street, and a cry leaped to my lips.

The man thus early abroad was Orson Tang, and when he discovered me he quickened his pace and, with an inquisitive smile upon his sallow face, stopped at the edge of the porch.

"You didn't have a good rest?" he leered. "I can see it by your looks. What happened in the big house?"

"The girl came," said I, and I waited for his comment.

"The girl? Yes, I saw her. Isn't she a sprinter? Can run like a deer, and sometimes she didn't seem to touch the ground."

"Which way did she go?"

"They took her off with them. I followed her out of town and saw her whisked away in a car."

"You don't mean——"

"The little dark men," he answered. "The rats that tied you to the table."

I stared at the man incredulously. It seemed impossible, and yet his look convinced me.

"And they went——"

"Toward the city."

There was nothing left for me but to take the same direction. My night hunt was over. It had only deepened the mystery, made darker things upon which there would have been thrown some light had I mastered the girl. I went back, falling asleep long before the rattling car reached the environs of the great town. I longed to get back to my nest to think the whole thing over. There was a plot in which Thaddora was a central figure, and around whom the Hindus moved. But think it out I could not, twist the subject any way I might, and at last I desisted.

When I found the tangle so deep as to resist all my efforts I went out, and in a few moments presented myself at the Trevor residence on Albert avenue. I fancied that I presented no enviable appearance after the adventures of the night, and therefore was not unprepared to see Miss Trevor start at my coming.

The young lady opened the door with a mute question on her lips and ushered me into the parlor.

"I'm glad you have come. We have news of uncle," were her first words. "He has sent a note which you shall see."

She opened a book which lay upon the table and drew forth a folded paper which she extended.

"It isn't lengthy," she went on. "Nor does it satisfy me. But he wrote it, for I recognize his handwriting."

I mastered the contents of the scrawl, for scrawl it seemed, in a moment, and then looked up into her face.

I had read as follows:

"I have been detained longer than I had expected. Do not fear for me."

"How did this reach you?" I asked.

"A man brought it last night."

"What sort of man."

I cannot tell you, for he did not give me more than a glimpse of his face. He went off as suddenly as he came. What I saw of him, however, was not pleasant, but one has strange servants sometimes. The man looked dark of face——"

"Like a Hindu?" I interrupted, thinking always of the slimy band I had encountered at Edgecliff.

"I will hardly say that, but he had the movements of Saidi Si, who comes to see uncle.'

The note quivered in my hands. I read it again, trying in vain to extract something from it, but it was a failure.

"Where's Thaddora, your maid?"

"Asleep in her room. The girl had a night out with old friends."

"I see—with old friends," and I felt there was a tinge of sarcasm in my voice.

"You do not credit Thaddora's story, I perceive," said Miss Trevor. "What have you to say against it?"

"Nothing now," said I.

"Tell me one thing," I continued shiftingly. "It is about your uncle's deformity. Does he ever use his withered hand?"

She started, and fastened her eyes upon my face.

"He cannot," she answered at last. "Your query puzzles me deeply. He has no strength in it, none whatever. It is as powerless as a babe's. Why, I have seen him try to grasp the lightest trifle, but the fingers won't hold. As I have told you, he is supersensitive about his affliction, and ashamed of it."

I was about to reply to her in a manner which would not betray the story Orson Tang had told me about the tragedy he claimed to have witnessed in the house in the woods, when I heard a movement beyond the room, and Miss Trevor put her fingers to her lips.

"Thaddora!" she whispered.

Some one was coming down the stair; I heard the footfalls plainly and wanted to rush out and confront the girl, but refrained.

On the landing the footfalls stopped, as if their owner was listening; then they began again, and a door opened somewhere. At any rate, the girl had moved on.

"Tell me something about your maid," said I. "When did she come into your life?"

"You are suspecting Thaddora now," she bantered. "I acknowledge she is not like other girls. She is a somnambulist, but surely that's not against her, is it?"

"And a spy!" I blurted so suddenly that Miss Trevor recoiled.

"Thaddora a spy?" cried Miss Trevor, turning white. "A spy for whom?"

I saw that Sebastian Trevor's niece resented my implication, for she flushed as quickly as she had whitened and went toward the door.

"We'll let Thaddora answer you," I heard her say, hardly above her breath, and the next moment I heard her calling to the maid.

There was a prompt answer from another part of the house, and I heard the same footfalls that had sounded on the stair.

It took but a moment for the maid to enter the room where we stood, and it was I who started back. There was no surprise on the maid's part; she stopped and looked me straight in the eye without a quaver and wholly self-possessed.

If she was playing a double game she was a marvel of nerve, for she stood like a statue in marble, as fresh as though she had enjoyed a long night's slumber.

"This gentlemen calls you a spy, Thaddora," began Miss Trevor. "I think you can clear yourself of the charge."

With a haughty toss of the head, accompanied by a flashing of the sloe-black eyes, the unabashed maid met her mistress' words with a ringing laugh. And there I was so baffled by a cool-headed girl that I could not speak.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOURTEEN days had now elapsed since the disappearance of Sebastian Trevor, and the mystery was as dark as ever. The cool assurance of Thaddora, Miss Trevor's maid, was a thorn in my flesh, one which sank deeper and deeper as I thought it over, and I was compelled to endure it for the present.

I carried away from the house the mysterious note, ostensibly received from the missing man, with a view to running it down later on. There was another thing which was still unexplained, and that was Orson Tang's story of what he had seen at the house in the woods. It was, therefore, for the purpose of confirming his story, or branding it false, that I rang Dr. Van Cliff's office bell before the idea was out of my mind.

Dr. Van Cliff was Sebastian Trevor's family physician, and I found him a mild-mannered man for a few moments at his leisure.

He had heard of his friend's vanishment, and when I mentioned my calling he was instantly interested.

"Trevor is one of the most remarkable men I ever knew," he went on. "His mind flits from one great idea to another; he is a genius."

"Yes, I have called to talk about his handicap—the withered hand."

"Not so much of a handicap as you imagine. His will power is such that in a moment he can control that apparently useless member and render it as effective as the opposite digit. I learned this one day in an unexpected manner. I left him alone in my office for a while, and upon returning I saw him lift one of my largest medical books from the loftiest shelf with the aid of the 'useless' hand. It was his wonderful will power."

"Doctor, do you think he could strangle a man with that deformed hand?"

"I should not care to have him experiment on me," smiled the physician. "But surely my friend hasn't gone into the strangling business?"

"It was just a suggestion of mine. You see, I haven't been convinced that Trevor is so hopeless for all his affliction. Did he ever confide any inventive secrets to you?"

"Nothing beyond the boast that he thought he could bring the war to a close by an invention, leading me to believe that he was thinking of something to that purpose. His scientific brain is almost abnormally developed; he has wealth to enable him to carry out his projects, coupled with an industry that never flags. I repeat that Trevor is a remarkable man."

So much for Orson Tang's story.

There was a suspicion at headquarters that Trevor's disappearance was the outgrowth of German intrigue, that the Imperial government was anxious to wrest one of his secrets from him before Washington could be benefited by it. This suspicion was still very vague, but the Office clung to the implication, although it admitted that it had but little to build on.

It had long been suspected that the secret hand of Wilhelm had reached out across the seas through the aid of alien spies who were industriously at work wresting our secrets from us and crippling our government in many ways.

The discovery of the model of the submarine in the secret niche at Edgecliff showed me the trend of Trevor's invention, and I did not doubt that it was the thing he mentioned to Dr. Van Cliff which was destined to end the war.

If the presence of the Hindus in the house in the woods meant that they were on the trail of this invention it was more than certain that they had not found it. Perhaps they had not discovered the sliding panel which had yielded to Orson Tang's search, but it was more than likely that they would not long be balked. They would come again, would ransack the house with more diligence and finally go away rewarded unless the invention was removed.

That these dark men were under Saidi Si, whoever he was, I now firmly believed, and moreover that it was my duty to turn my investigations in his direction.

There existed in the city a Burman cult which was well known; its ramifications extended beyond the city limits and its devotees included Americans in high life. The strange doctrines of Vishnu and Siva seemed to have a fascination for the rich, and in the Buddhist temple of whose location I was outwardly familiar the secret practices of the mystic East were carried on.

But of Saidi Si I knew nothing. That he was the friend and frequent visitor of Sebastian Trevor I had already discovered through Miss Honore; beyond this nothing.

Dropping the house in the woods for the nonce and Thaddora as well, though I did not put them entirely from my mind, I set out upon another trail, well aware of the danger connected with it, for whoever crosses the path of the mystic puts his life in peril. The Hindus who followed the journey of the "Moonstone" in Wilkie Collins' master narrative acquainted me with the cunning of the slaves of Buddha and put me severely on my guard.

I had a friend who had dipped into the mystic, a singular man whom I had once befriended in a manner that made him my debtor, and my first step was toward him.

I found Jason Eyer in his little home in a humble quarter of the city, and our greeting was friendly. His dark little eyes, full of the cunning of the serpent, as they looked out of their cavernous sockets, seemed to suspect my mission, and I proceeded cautiously.

"You are treading dangerous soil," said he when I had broached my mission. "There are pitfalls for all who cross the mystics. I must warn you, as it is my duty. Saidi Si is at the head of the weird religion that has at last invaded America. Already it is powerful, almost a religious oligarchy. You have already become known to the masters of the dark cult. By your visit to Edgecliff and your adventures there you are regarded as its enemy. Should the Hindus return to the house in the woods they will discover your escape and be warned against you."

"Granted," said I, "but the incident makes me the more eager to unearth the mystics."

"Do you think Saidi Si is concerned in the vanishment of Sebastian Trevor?"

"I believe the trail leads in that direction. What were the Hindus doing at Edgecliff that night if their trail did not lead to Trevor's secret?"

"It certainly looked that way. They saw in you a living challenge and they acted accordingly."

"And would have won out but for the coming of Orson Tang."

"It is not for one not a devotee to cross the threshold of the Temple of Siva, as the forbidden place is called. It is the abode of all the mysticism of the old East. Do you know that it is the home of the Cord, the temple of the Perfumed Death which you so narrowly escaped? Better let the disappearance of Sebastian Trevor remain forever a mystery rather than cross swords with Saidi Si."

Reading in my eyes even before I answered him my determination, Jason Eyer put out his hand.

"I will help you!" he said. "Here's the hand of Eyer to the end, bitter though it be for me. I have not been inducted into the deepest secrets of the dark and hellish cult, but I have seen its workings. Come to me to-morrow night. Come with the determination to risk your life perhaps on a useless trail."

I left Jason Eyer's presence with the sworn promise that I would come to him at the appointed hour, and feeling that the new trail would lead to darker scenes than I had yet encountered.

As I opened my door something fluttered to the floor, a bit of paper which I hastily picked up.

It proved to be a message from Miss Trevor, asking me to come to her at once. There was an air of importance in the brief note, and I was away in a moment.

I found the young lady awaiting me in the parlor, and at once I caught the change in her demeanor.

"I have something to disclose which may only add to the mystery you have in hand. Thaddora is gone!"

I was not quite prepared for this startling announcement, though after my several encounters with the girl I should have been prepared for anything.

"This gentleman calls you a spy, Thaddora," began Miss Trevor. "I think you can clear yourself of the charge."

"She left without warning," continued Miss Trevor. "But this is not all I have to disclose. My uncle is alive, for a large sum has been drawn from his bank by his personal check. I have identified the draft upon his resources by a secret mark which he affixes to all of them, a mark which is known only to him, myself and the officials."

"When did this happen?"

"Yesterday."

"Who presented the check?"

"The bearer was without name."

"What was the amount?"

"Four thousand dollars."

I started.

There were four Hindus connected with my adventure at the house in the woods. The thought, if not the coincidence, went through my mind like a flash.

"The check was paid without question?" I asked when I found my tongue.

"The secret mark confirmed its genuineness," Miss Tre-

vor returned. "The bank had no authority to refuse payment."

I was nonplussed. Here was a new tack, but a moment later I thought of something else.

"Will you let me see Thaddora's apartments?" I asked.

"Certainly, though I have searched them myself without result," and she rose to escort me to the maid's late quarters.

CHAPTER SIX

THE girl's apartment was on the second floor, a cheerful, well-kept room which overlooked the rose garden connected with the house. I saw at once that Thaddora was neat and tidy in her ways, and could almost imagine that she stood at my side.

"You shall have the room to yourself as long as as you like," Miss Trevor said. "I will see that you are not disturbed," and I saw her vanish.

The place promised to reward me but little, but I was not going to give in without an effort. I first opened the drawers of the cedar dresser that stood at one side of the room by the window. Everything was arranged neatly, though there were evidences that Thaddora in her somewhat hasty flight had selected and carried off a few articles.

I next turned to the wardrobe, the key to which was in the doors. As I swung back the red portal a singular perfume greeted me. It was unpleasant at first, owing, I first thought, to its being confined, but as it continued to fill my nostrils I was inclined to change my mind. Somewhere I had inhaled the peculiar odor, and I racked my brains for its identity. All at once the solution flashed across my mind. I remembered that when I was clutched by the head Hindu at the house in the woods the same subtle perfume emanated from his garments. There was no mistaking the resemblance.

I started back from the wardrobe and stood in the middle of the floor. Where should I look next?

Remembering that some girls, especially maids, have a fashion of hiding trifles behind their mirrors, I stepped over to the glistening glass and put my hand behind it. To my delight it came in contact with a paper which I quickly brought to the light and found it to be an envelope somewhat crumpled and addressed to "Thaddora Devens."

Evidently the girl had forgotten to remove the letter or, not considering it of supreme importance, had let it remain. The scrawl upon the surface of the envelope was evidently masculine and, mastering it at a glance, I extracted the folded sheet inside.

As it came forth I found something between my fingers which was hard and rough, and I uttered a singular ejaculation as I brought my second discovery to light.

A strange grotesque thing it was that I held in my hand, a weird face cut in ivory, not from a living model, as I knew at a look, but from the hideous often-seen presentiments of an Indian deity. It was the head of Vishu, one of the gods of the Hindu triad. Besides this there was nothing else in the envelope, not even the shortest line. The mystic countenance of the Eastern idol seem to mock me with its grin. I translated this into a question: "Here I am. What do you think of me in a young lady's bedchamber?"

I transferred Vishnu and the envelope to my pocket and resumed my search, but nothing further rewarded it.

When I descended the broad stair Miss Trevor met me at the bottom, for she had heard me coming down. A question trembled on her lips, but she did not speak, and I did not reveal my secret. She was very pale and distraught, perhaps over Thaddora's flight and the prevailing mystery of the house.

Slowly pulling herself together, she said in a low voice: "May I ask what, if anything, you have discovered about my uncle's disappearance? It is the one great thing that disturbs me, though the cashing of the bank check gives me hope that he is living."

"But where, and under what conditions?" I suddenly answered. "I beg of you to keep heart and hope. The check seems to me the silvery lining of the cloud. It may eventually give us a clue," and not wishing to protract a conversation which proved unpleasant to her I took my departure.

The last I saw of her as she held the door open to let me out told told me that she was suffering greatly, as if the strain of the dark mystery had already weakened her, but she was trying to bear up under it with a courageous woman's fortitude.

I remembered my engagement with Jason Eyer, and began at once to put my house in order for what might ensue from my adventure with Saidi Si. That I was going into the depths of the Unknown was to me a certainty which I did not disguise. Back once more in my quiet quarters, I overhauled my revolver and wrote a brief note to the bureau, which I handed to my landlady, accompanying it with instructions that if I did not return with two days to carry it to its destination.

Then I went direct to Jason Eyer's house. I found him stretched out upon a divan, but he rose at once and greeted me.

"You haven't reconsidered your purpose?" he asked with some alarm.

"My presence here is proof that I am going to the end of the tangled skein. You have not forgotten your promise?"

"I never forget my obligations. I wish you had not come to me for that promise."

Down by the river that flowed slowly through a quaint old part of the city lay a quarter not very clean. It seemed a part of another world with its ancient buildings, narrow streets and strange-looking inhabitants. In the middle of this seldom-visited ground rose a structure of singular mien known to the initiated as the Temple of Buddha. Its outward complexion savored of the mysticism of the East; what was inside I was yet to see.

At the eventful hour Jason Eyer and I turned into this devil-land.

I heard the sonorous tones of St. Michael's clock as it sent out eleven strokes, and looking up I saw the darkened sky overhead. The weird swish of the adjacent river sounded dolefully on my ears, and I turned to Jason Eyer to see that he was eyeing me, wondering if the dark stream did not remind me of Lethe.

All at once he turned to the right and plunged into a tortuous street, bringing up against the front of the temple itself.

There was a tall house near by with a forbidding stoop, and suddenly clutching my arm he pushed me forward, saying:

"Wait for me!" and the next moment he was gone.

Moments seemed eternities as I tried to make myself comfortable in my strange hiding-place. The very silence grated upon my nerves. I had been in strange "fixes" before, but never with the feelings that had taken possession of me.

I tried to peer into the darkness beyond the stoop, but it baffled me. I had lost sight of my guide in a second. It seemed as if the very ground had opened and engulfed him. After all had he betrayed me to the enemy, for was he not a disciple of Buddha? Man is treacherous by nature; after all but a wild beast preying upon his fellowman. Judas had betrayed his Master, why should not man betray his earthly kin?

At last I heard the movement of feet. I leaned forward with my hand on my weapon. The sound was but a slight one as if made by sandals. There was a something before my face. It vanished, came back again with the movements of the spy and slowly disappeared for good. But I had seen something, something human in form and yet animal in nature.

Then there came another figure from somewhere, then another till I had counted four, all ghost-like, supernatural, till I ejaculated:

"The agents of the Temple, the followers of Saidi Si! The little dark demons who caught me in the house in the

woods, and sentenced me to the ordeal of the Perfumed Death!"

There was another lengthy silence broken at last by a hurried footstep and the whispered voice of Jason Eyer at my side:

"Come!" it said. "The coast is clear."

He pulled me out of the niche which had become unbearable, and we went forward a few steps.

My eyes had become used to the gloom, and I saw his slender figure in more than outline. But he had changed his garments. There was now the semblance of a turban on his head, and his face was a dark brown.

He found somewhere with his eyes a little door at the top of a trio of steps. He placed his hand upon it and, with a mystical movement, opened the portal.

"Silence means life! Remember this!" and he pushed me on and the door swung back.

I felt that I had come to the dread mystical Unknown, to the temple of Saidi Si.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THERE was a stillness connected with the semi-gloom by which I was surrounded that betokened peril. I barely made out the moving figure of Jason Eyer at my side, and silent lips warned me that not a word was to be spoken. After pacing some distance ahead a door was reached which yielded to my companion's hand, and we entered a lofty room, the interior of which was revealed by a soft mystic light which seemed to find its way from some place overhead.

Jason Eyer turned to me with a pallid face, the lines in which were deeply sunken. Now, for the first time since entering the mystic abode, his voice reached my ears.

"I have brought you this far," said he, his voice seeming to come from a long distance. "Await me here," and almost immediately disappeared.

The strange light overhead slowly vanished, and I was alone. I had not heard my companion's footsteps as he retired, for he had put on sandals, and though I listened for his return he came not out of the singular haze which seemed to envelope the premises.

I waited for Jason Eyer until fear and impatience got the better of me. Had I been inducted into a trap from which there was no escape? After all, was Jason Eyer still the slave of his Hindu master, and was I to be sacrificed by the merciless cult?

At last, unable to endure the suspense any longer, I moved across the chamber to where the semblance of a door had greeted me. It was a door, sure enough, and when I touched it with my outstretched hand it yielded.

Though the little portal invited me to explore still further the Unknown, I did not hesitate, but boldly set my foot across the threshold and advanced. Maybe, I thought, Jason Eyer had expected this movement on my part. At least he had not returned to warn me.

Beyond the little door was a narrow corridor, the two walls of which I could touch with an effort. They were lofty and smooth, and the top of them I was unable to perceive. When I reached the end of the corridor my foot found an incline, which I took at once, determined to see the end of the strange adventure, come what might.

A minute later I was at a considerable height from the bottom and, to my surprise, was looking down upon a circular court lighted by a swinging lamp. I drew back to the wall of my surroundings and leaned forward with every sense on the alert and my fingers grasping the revolver.

Scarcely had I looked ere down below something human appeared, running across the floor silent and rat-like. It was followed by another figure of like import, and the twain vanished seemingly beyond the solid walls.

I felt the mysticism of the moment, for I held my breath and heard the beating of my heart. All at once a door beneath me opened and there stepped into view a figure I shall never forget.

That I was looking down upon the master of the Temple I did not doubt. A tall man with the robes of the Hindu, and the dark face of the old East, subtle in movement, slimy as the serpent of that ancient region—Saidi Si.

He advanced to the center of the circular chamber by slow and measured steps and sat down upon a couch which occupied the center of the place.

Presently the two figures which I had seen cross the floor a few minutes before came out of the wall and fell upon their bare knees before him. A moment later they sprang to their feet and again vanished, but not for long.

When they reappeared they bore between them a figure which they supported and again salaamed before Saidi Si.

I could scarcely suppress a cry which certainly would have betrayed me. The face of the man who now stood before the Buddhist demon was covered, as I could see, by a dark cloth, but something told me that I was looking down upon Sebastian Trevor.

Saidi Si leaned from the couch or divan, and reaching out his long arm, spoke to the man. His voice was a whisper which did not come up to me. I saw the body of the masked one move as if under the power of some mystic influence; then it suddenly fell to the floor.

I looked around for some means of descent. I would save Sebastian Trevor from the power of the dark cult to which he had sold his soul, but there was no way down but the incline by which I had ascended to my coign-of-vantage, and I was perforce obliged to remain.

Under the great mental stress, feeling my blood tingle with indignation, I resolved to put an end to this strange scene and reach the end of my trail by one supreme coup. I drew back and went down the incline. Guided by the smooth wall I was not long in reaching the bottom.

Believing that I was on a level with the lower floor of the circular chamber, I sought for a door that would admit me to its mysteries.

All at once my searching hands found a little portal which, like all the doors of the Temple, seemed to yield at a single touch. I plunged into the opening. It was large enough to admit a human body and no more.

That the room into which I had plunged was only separated from Saidi Si's dupe by a single wall I was sure. But the barrier maddened me.

It might have been a wall of iron for all I knew, for it yielded not. I panted in my rage. That cursed wall seemed adamant as it rose before me with the strength of the walls of Babylon. As I sought for an opening the strains of a strange chant rose from somewhere beyond the barrier, mystic, weird, dying away after a spell, to leave behind an echo like the chant itself.

The sounds ceased so suddenly that I started and recoiled. I felt that the mummery of heathenism had ended to give place to—what?

In after-days and under different circumstances, I lived over the moments in the Temple of Buddha, and even now they come back to me with full force, but the strains heard then have now a different sound.

I had found Sebastian Trevor, but he was beyond my reach; I had reached the fringe of the strange vanishment of the inventor of Albert avenue. Saidi Si had duped him for an infernal purpose. He was the moth in the Buddhist flame. His secret would surely fall into the hands of the enemy, and I believed that enemy to be the Hohenzollern.

As I thought, with the impassable wall before me, Saidi Si became more than the mystic. He was the agent of the kaiser, and it was his duty to wrest from Sebastian Trevor the secret which he intended to present to his government. If not, why the four Hindus in the house in the woods? Why Thaddora there on the night of my visit, feeling the wall for the sliding door which concealed the model of the submarine? Germany knows everything. Nothing escapes the spies of the Teuton beast.

Yes, Saidi Si was more than the priest of Buddha. Beneath his dark skin he was German.

These conclusions flashed through my heated brain as I tugged at the silent wall.

Suddenly I paused. Something was behind me, some-

thing unseen, but felt as plainly as if my hands had touched it. I turned and backed against the wall.

I had heard no door open, but still the Presence was there somewhere in the gloom, almost within reach of my hand.

I could hear it breathe. A sigh came distinctly to my ears, and then it was followed by a footstep.

"Thank heaven, I am here!" said a voice. "I am not going back to the old nest any more."

My heart seemed to leap into my throat and imbed itself there. I had heard that voice before upon several occasions, and never for a moment had I forgotten them.

The words spoken in the darkness died away, then silence came. I moved one foot forward and shot out a hand which must serve me for eyes.

And eyes it had, for it went straight to the unseen mark. There was a stifled cry, but I held on. I put all my energy into my clutch despite the fact that the voice I heard was a woman's. I had no mercy for the tender sex then.

I drew the struggling form toward me and hissed:

"You have nothing to fear if you are discreet. You have all to dread if you are not."

"Mercy!" came from between the lips of the unseen creature.

Believing that the wall behind me would not betray me I struck a lucifer with my free hand and looked at my captive. It was as I thought, for the voice had not deceived me.

I had caught Thaddora!

She drew as far back as she could and glared at me with the mien of a tigress. Her face was white, her black eyes dancing viciously like the cobra's, and her breaths little gasps.

"Speak, girl," said I. "Tell the truth. It was Vishnu's face you left behind your mirror. Your master is behind this wall. He is the prisoner of Saidi Si. You are in the plot. Sebastian Trevor must surrender his secret to the conspirators or die. Is it not so?"

She swung back her head and, as once before, laughed in my face.

"You are on the wrong trail, Mr. Ferret. I swear to you that Sebastian Trevor is not under this roof. As I hope for God's mercy, I know he is not!"

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE girl's words so solemnly spoken had scarcely died away when I was aware that I was alone. I did not hear her go, nor know whither she went, but I was the only occupant of the place.

Perhaps by some unseen mechanism the wall had opened to her; perhaps she had touched some hidden spring—at any rate she was gone.

But almost as mysteriously another came in her place, and I heard the voice of Jason Eyer.

"You did not wait for me?" he said, upbraidingly. "You had to turn investigator for yourself?"

"Yes, and I have seen the master spirit of the place."

"Saidi Si?"

"The Burman demon."

"No one else?"

I told him what I had discovered from my point of vantage; the mystic doings in the circular chamber, the coming of the masked man, to all of which he listened without once interrupting me. But I did not speak of the coming of Thaddora, that secret I kept to myself for obvious reasons.

"Then let us go," Jason Eyer replied. "You have seen enough for to-night."

"But the hidden face?" and I laid my hand on his arm. "Tell me. Have I seen Sebastian Trevor?"

"No."

"Some other victim of the cabal?"

"Perhaps. Let the future speak," and we left the Temple silently and on tiptoe.

I parted with Jason Eyer near his abode and he soon vanished. The night had been one of adventures as well mystery, but I yearned for more. I could not dismiss Thaddora from my mind. What had taken her to the abode of the Burman? Certainly she had come there for a purpose which my presence had interrupted. Had she gone home, wherever that was? No longer was she maid to Honore. That retreat was no longer open to her, but she had a nest somewhere, a nest as difficult to discover as that of the wily serpent. I was satisfied that the girl was doomed to play an important part in the solution of the Trevor enigma. I must not lose sight of her, wily and defiant though she was, but how to trace her was the thing.

I had not gained much by my visit to the Temple of Buddha, though I had seen Saidi Si. That dark and wily devil might be as slippery as an eel and, after all, uncertain game.

I made my way to my lodgings in no elevated frame of mind. In truth, I was angry at myself for putting my fortunes into Jason Eyer's hands. It looked like seeking trouble, if not real peril.

The night was waning when I opened the door of my abode and passed up to my room.

"I have been waiting for you, and it has been eternity," said a voice as I opened the door. "I thought you would come some time, for the bird comes home at last."

"Drexel!" I exclaimed as I switched on the light. "Old boy, I welcome you."

And I sat down beside the man whom I addressed.

Mark Drexel was a fellow detective whom I had not encountered for many weeks. I knew he was out of town on a trail connected with alien spies, and not knowing when he would return I had had no means of telling him about my doings.

"That's a strange story of yours," he replied when he had listened to my narrative. "I believe I have something that fits into your case. I have been following a plot against the government in which a little dark man is involved. I find him and then miss him. He appears and vanishes. I am baffled. I have been two days looking him up in the city, and he is still at large, or rather in hiding. A veritable will-o-the-wisp. Maybe if I were to pry into the secrets of the Buddhist temple I might be rewarded. The man is undoubtedly a German spy whose duty is to bring to naught a plan to destroy U-boats."

"Like Sebastian Trevor's invention?" I exclaimed.

"I cannot say about that, as I have never examined Trevor's invention, but genius sometimes works in different grooves to the same ends. My genius has invented a submarine that attacks the enemy from the bottom. It comes up under a vessel noiselessly and destroys it without injury to itself. This is the invention which Germany is after. The model which you say is hidden in the wall of the house at Edgecliff is different."

"So far as I could see," I answered.

"Wolves sometimes hunt in pairs, why not men?" asked Drexel.

I caught his meaning and accepted it. We would work together, though I would keep the real trail to myself, and this was the finding of Sebastian Trevor.

It was nearly the peep o' day ere Drexel left me and I turned in for rest, but not for sleep. The late events kept riot in my brain, and at last I surrendered. I could not sleep for chasing them.

The girl Thaddora would come back with her doll-like face in spite of me. Her sloe-black eyes would glint and laugh in my face, and I could see her standing before me, denying with consummate coolness that she had ever been to Edgecliff and that Saidi Si's mystery shop harbored Sebastian Trevor.

My little grill-room was around the nearest corner, and at the usual hour I made my appearance there. Making my way to my secluded table where I was always waited on by a comely girl, I gave my order while still thinking about the events of the past night.

When I looked up at last my eye caught sight of a figure just rising from a table across the room. At the

same time my order came. I instantly rose with startled face. Fortune had thrown herself into my arms. The figure I had seen was Thaddora's.

I was quite sure Honore's maid had not noticed me, and now that she had so suddenly and opportunely placed herself in my path I could not afford to lose her. I pushed my breakfast back and rose to my feet. The girl was at the door, having paid the cashier, to whom I threw a coin for the uneaten meal and started in pursuit.

Nimble of foot was Thaddora, and she vanished around the corner in the quickness of a flash. When I turned the same corner she was still in sight, though I half-expected to see nothing.

It was a little chase which I enjoyed, seeing that the prey was worth the toil, and at last I saw the maid step to the gutter and hail a passing taxi.

What—was the girl going to give me a stern chase? She waited for the taxi to wheel about and then, taking a hasty look about her, she entered, settling back with the utmost composure.

It was just like Thaddora, never flustered, cool at all times, just the kind who give the man-hunters trouble and deepen human mysteries.

Now, I was not going to let the chit get away without an effort on my part to run her down. I caught sight of a second taxi, which seemed to come into being for the express purpose of assisting me in my dilemma, and soon I was off on the chase.

Fortunately the girl did not lead me a long chase. I saw her alight at a corner and enter a house which I knew must be her new home. So far so good. I made note of the dwelling, for I did not intend to flush the bird. Thaddora could rest secure in the belief that she had not been followed. She could feel that she had baffled me by her cleverness, and when she thought she had triumphed I would turn up and dash to earth her house of cards.

I turned to other scenes of the game. I went to the bank which had cashed the four-thousand-dollar check signed with Trevor's name and had it presented to me for inspection.

"It must be genuine, for here in the corner is Trevor's secret mark which identifies the paper," said the cashier. "There is no doubt of the genuineness of the check. It is made payable to bearer, as many of his checks are. You haven't found Trevor yet?"

I bit my lip, confessing failure, but added that I hoped the future would be productive of success.

"We will compare the writing in the body of the check with this," said I, taking from my pocket the note left at Honore's door.

"What is that?" asked Mr. Melton.

"A message purporting to come from Sebastian Trevor, assuring his niece of his safety. It is not signed, but she recognizes the chirography as his."

"She does, eh?" exclaimed the young cashier, picking up the two papers and subjecting them to the severest scrutiny. "Look here. There's something wrong. The hand that wrote the note did not write out the check."

I leaned forward excitedly. He picked up a lens and, after another look, handed it to me. It took but a moment to convince me that Melton was right.

"Are you convinced now?" he queried. "The eye may be deceiving, but not this glass."

Here was a new angle, a fresh crime, another mystery. Was Sebastian Trevor dead? As I rapidly thought it over I resolved to go back to Edgecliff and, with the aid of Orson Tang, find the hidden model of the submarine and remove it before Germany could profit by its latest crime.

CHAPTER NINE

I WAS soon to realize that man proposes, but God or fate—call it what you will—disposes. There was no need, I thought, of making the trip to Edgecliff immediately. That journey could wait a day or two, so I resolved to visit the mansion on Albert avenue to see how things were moving there. I knew that Thaddora had not returned to her old post, but now that I had discovered her new nest she was not likely to pass beyond my detection. The next night after the events detailed in the foregoing chapter was chosen for my visit, and when I rang Miss Trevor opened the door so suddenly that I imagined she had been expecting me.

That something out of the ordinary had happened since my last visit I at once discerned from the pallor on her face. She was not her old self, though she was trying to be so, and when she had conducted me to the parlor she nervously locked the door.

"I have much to say," she began when she had seated herself. "The unexpected and the terrible has happened. But let me begin at the beginning. After Thaddora's flight I began to look for a new maid and found one in an Americanized Swede, a robust girl whose looks pleased me on sight. Olive promised to take Thaddora's place in every way. I had long intended to call on an old acquaintance in another part of the city, and last night I carried out my intention. I left Olive in charge of the house, cautioning her to admit no one, no matter what their pretext. I also asked her to spend her time in this room, which she promised to do.

"I was detained much longer than usual, and when I set out for home it was eleven o'clock. This part of the city, as you may know, is not counted dangerous, so I was not in need of an escort. I met no one on my return and let myself in with the latch-key. When I opened the door leading into this room and got one glance over it I reeled backward with a startling cry. Olive was as good as her word; she was on guard, but bound and gagged in this chair. It took me a full minute to pull myself together and release the poor girl, who was too excited to speak. It was only by degrees that I drew from her the story of what had happened. It was startling enough in every particular.

"It seems that the maid had settled down for an hour's reading. All at once she heard footsteps in the hall, and before she could investigate the door was flung open and two men sprang forward. Taken unawares, she virtually lost her head, and before she could cry out she was seized by the men, forced down into the chair and rendered powerless in the manner I have described. Leaving the maid in her helpless condition, the villains withdrew and ascended to the second floor as Olive could imagine by certain sounds on the stair.

"She tried to twist out of her bonds, but without avail, and was forced to await my return. When I had heard her story we two began to investigate. The upper part of the house had been deliberately ransacked, but so careful had the men been that apparently nothing had been disturbed or taken. They went through Uncle Trevor's workshop systematically. What they moved they carefully replaced. His private drawers in which he kept his most valuable papers did not escape them; they were thoroughly searched, but whether anything was extracted I cannot say.

"They went as silently as they had come. They looked in upon the maid and saw that she was still the captive of the chair, and when they closed the door she saw no more of them. This is my story of the night, and a strange one I think it is."

Miss Trevor finished abruptly and settled back into the chair.

For a moment neither of us spoke.

"It is a part of the plot," said I, breaking the silence. "It is the hand of Saidi Si."

"What! the doings of that Hindu devil?" exclaimed the girl as her face flushed. "I had not thought of that in the least."

"There is something I have kept from you till this moment. I believe it is more than a theory of mine. Your uncle was engaged upon an invention which he believed is destined to end the great war."

"Yes. He once imparted that much of his secret to me. He has two workshops, the one upstairs and the other at

Edgecliff. He divided his time between them, sometimes being absent for days at a time."

"The hand of Germany is to be seen in the events of last night," said I. "The two men were looking for the model of the great invention. Do you know where it is?"

"That is a part of the secret which Uncle Trevor guards zealously. It lies in the inner sanctum of his brain. Where he keeps his work, whether here or at Edgecliff, is a mystery to me. Olive and I have gone through the house following the trail of the searchers, but without success. They must have known of my absence and thought the house for the time being untenanted. They did not count on the girl, but as you see they were prepared for any sort of resistance. Now let me turn inquisitor for a moment," smiled Honore. "I do not want to rob you of any information which you may hold sacred. You detectives do not share your secrets with the layman. But I am anxious about Uncle Trevor. Is he alive?"

"I have discovered nothing to the contrary, though all is mystery," I answered as softly yet assuringly as I could. "The search of the German cabal goes on with zeal for the invention. It means much to the kaiser, and his agents will not leave a stone unturned to accomplish their mission. They are desperate and resourceful. Headed by Saidi Si, as I verily believe, they are agents to be dreaded, because they will stoop to anything to do the will of their royal paymaster and must be fought with cunning and fire. Evidently the two agents will trouble you no more, since their hunt in this house has been without results. But you must be on your guard at all times."

As I rose to go Miss Trevor left her chair and stood before me with outstretched hands. Her symmetrical figure was set off to advantage in the soft light that filled the room, and I saw how regally fair she was.

"You are not going to give in?" she cried. "They are not going to baffle you?"

"No! I am in the battle against dark intrigue to the end. We are fighting the machinations of Germany here as surely as the Allies are across the sea. You have my promise that I am not out of the game and will never be till we have solved this mystery in every particular."

"You give me heart and hope," she replied. "Come to me for aid whenever you think I can render it. It will be a long chase, I'm afraid, and much of it will be in the dark. There is the occult to fight, the dark arts of Buddha as represented in Saidi Si and his followers; but we will triumph in the end, will we not?"

Her eyes lit up with anticipated victory which inspired me, and when she laid her hand in mine to say good-by I resolved to go back to the trail with new ardor.

For some time I walked rapidly from the house and then slowed down. One can think better when the muscles of the body are not unduly exerted, and I wanted time for reflection. Miss Trevor's narrative had been tremendously startling. I saw in it the doings of Saidi Si and his minions. The master mind of the Hindu Temple was still at work. It had not accomplished its purpose. Sebastian Trevor's secret was still safe, but there was no telling how long one could say this. The inventor with the withered hand was till missing, and no door opened that let light in upon the darkness that enveloped his fate.,

I was turning into another street when a green motor car dashed up to the curb. It scarcely attracted my attention, but the next second I was suddenly caught from behind, a hand was thrown over my mouth and I was lifted bodily by a giant's strength and thrown into the car.

All this was accomplished so quickly that I did not resist. The motor car shot away like a missile hurled from some powerful war weapon, and I found myself speeding away on the wings of the wind.

There was nothing to do but to submit. The menace of the revolver that almost touched my face told me that I was dealing with no ordinary enemies, and I kept silence.

For some time we kept up the breakneck speed, turning numerous corners, bounding over the asphalt till at last we seemed to leave the latter for a rougher route. The curtains of the green car had been closed after my capture, and I could only now and then see the lights of the streets.

At last the car stopped. A cap was pulled over my face by swiftly moving hands. I was lifted from the seat and carried to the sidewalk. There were now two pair of hands on my person, and I felt that I was in the tiger's power.

The car turned, but which way I could not see. I was in the net once more, in a darker net than that which I felt in the house in the woods, and there was no Orson Tang to come to the rescue.

A minute later—it did not seem longer—I was alone in a room which was dimly lighted by a little bulb which projected from one of the walls. I had been left to my reflections, which were not very pleasant, and which promised to be illumined by no ray of hope.

CHAPTER TEN

MY first thought was to take stock of my environment, which was not a difficult matter. I soon discovered that my prison was a small, square chamber without windows, proving that it was an interior one. The narrow door was the only point of egress. A seamless mat covered the entire floor. A little bulb diffused a soft light which enabled me to pursue my investigations. In the middle of the room stood a square table, and beside it a reclining chair of fumed oak. One corner was occupied by a low cot which did not invite comfortable repose. A book lay on the table, its only burden, and, impelled by curiosity, I advanced and picked it up. Its title startled me by its singular appropriateness, for it read: "Famous Assassinations of History. From Philip of Macedon to Queen Natilie." Surely not an appetising volume for one in my situation! Had this book been left for me, or had it been the companion of some unfortunate predecessor?

Despite the assumption that the little door was locked, I tried it, only to find that it did not yield. Cooped up in this strange prison I was helpless, for my captors had robbed me of my only friend, the automatic. My capture had been so sudden and the interior of the green motor car so dark that I had not been able to get a good look at my enemies. But I should probably see them again. There was nothing to do but wait—for what?

I flung myself into the chair and sat for a long time in the depths of despair. The German cabal could now work its will without me. For the nonce, if not forever, I was out of the game. All those whom I had battled against passed before me like the pictures of a kaleidoscope—Saidi Si, the four Hindus, Thaddora. Then came the face of Sebastian Trevor as I had seen it in a photograph in the parlor on Albert avenue. I drove these sights away by an exertion of will power. I was doomed, but not yet executed. The conspirators should yet feel my hand, and I would stand at the end of the trail, triumphant, despite the kaiser's machinations. I would prevent Trevor's wonderful invention from falling into the arch fiend's hands.

In spite of my resolutions I inwardly admitted that the outlook was dark. There was no one to strike my trail. Drexel had other work to do, and I could not look to him.

Now the trip to Edgecliff was indefinitely postponed. In the meantime the house in the woods might be searched by the four Hindus and the model discovered, even as Orson Tang had found its hiding-place.

At last, weary of speculation that produced nothing, I cast myself upon the cot and tried to close my eyes. Staring at the ceiling I suddenly discovered that I was observed, for an eye was looking down upon me. It had a singular glitter and never for a single moment relaxed its vigilance.

It went away as suddenly as I had caught its gleams, and where it had appeared there was again the dark ceiling.

But at last nature asserted her power and I fell into a slumber, losing consciousness. I was lost in the world

of dreams when I came back to life. The first thing that I noticed was the change that had been made. The table and the chair were gone.

This forerunner of coming deviltry put every sense on the alert.

I sprang to my feet, awed by my discovery and the silence that prevailed. The next moment the narrow door swung open and I stood face to face with two men. They closed the portal behind them and advanced a pace into the room and halted.

What their mission was I could imagine.

Dressed in half-Hindu costume, minus the turban, their sinuous bodies swaying weirdly as they came forward, they appeared to be as executioners.

"Sahib comes, Sahib goes!" one said, using words which I had heard before.

I did not reply, but looked them in the eye as I felt my nerves tingle.

Presently one dropped his brown hand into the depths of a pocket in his tunic and took out something from which leaped a little flame magically. He cast the thing from him by a dextrous movement and it fell at my feet. Instantly I felt that power of dark magic in the odor which saluted my nostrils. If I remained I was lost.

Suddenly I kicked the smoking object away and with all my power leaped straight at the little men. They instantly recoiled from the threatened impact, showing their teeth like tigers and throwing out their arms in self-defense, but I was desperate.

With their backs at the door they paused a moment, stunned by my charge, and ere I could reach them the portal opened and I was alone. I could almost laugh at the hasty exit of the brown men, and the next second I was standing at the door which now kept my desperate hands from their throats.

A cord was thrown around my neck and drawn tight.

It was only a partial victory, for I was still in bondage.

Had the table not been removed I should have attacked the door with it in an effort to force my way to freedom, but I was denied that ally.

However, I glanced around my prison for a weapon of assault and my eyes, falling upon the cot, I recoiled with a gasping cry. It had moved!

For a moment I continued to stare at it, half-dreaming that my eyes had deceived me; then I went forward and lifted the mattress from the floor. To my surprise I found a trapdoor which accounted for the strange actions of the cot, and my hands flew to the crack in the floor.

A moment's tugging and I had lifted the trap to behold an opening large enough to admit a human body. But I hesitated. Might it not be another trap of the German cabal to lure me to my doom?

Desperate as I was and bent on escape, I determined to accept the lure of the trap, and presently I was looking down into its depths. Noiselessly I lowered myself over the edge and felt a solid footing.

I was in a dark place, the dimensions of which I did not know and, for the nonce, did not care. I was out of the room with the little door, and that was something.

Groping my way to the right I felt a wall, then a door which refused to yield, and farther on a niche which led me on. I was underground, for the walls were of rough stone and the air was cold.

It was certain that the room of the little door was not a part of the Temple of Buddha, but rather another edifice under control of Saidi Si. I was still within its bounds, still in the coil of the Hindu serpent.

I stopped some time in the niche I had found and then moved on. The stones were smooth under my feet, and I could touch the walls on either side.

All at once I paused, for just ahead I saw an arrow of light. I drew back at sight of it. It might mean everything but freedom.

I nerved myself for the unknown, for the supreme moment of my life was at hand, and went forward trusting anew. The light came nearer and I saw near me the figure of a man who carried it. He was moving cautiously forward, carrying the wavering gleam in advance of his body. I drew back against the wall. He was near me now. I heard the click of a bolt as it shot back, a door swung open and the man with the rays was within arms' reach of me.

Summoning all my strength I sprang forward and sent my hands toward a human throat. As I clutched it there was a stifled cry which died instantly, then my grip hardened and I flung the gasping form away. It was the work of a desperate moment, and as the light bearer smashed against the wall I shot away at the top of my speed.

Liberty had beckoned me at the crucial moment, and I had accepted her call. Suddenly I brought up against a third door which, kinder than the others had been, did not resist, and I was beyond the house of terror! The city was before me; I saw the sky with its reflections, and knew that behind me lay the doom which my enemies had prepared for me.

Who had opened the path to freedom? I did not know, and at the time the query did not trouble me. It came later on in this marplot of mystery.

Once more in my quarters I sat down and thought the whole matter over. I had not been gone long, but in that short time I seemed to have lived a hundred years. And I was going to live another century for the purpose of getting even with the German cabal.

My landlady, hearing me in my room, came to the door with a strange piece of information and a message.

A man had called for me. A man who looked, she averred, like a magnate, and not finding me in had gone away without so much as leaving his name.

"He might have been a banker," she said with a smile. "He looked like a millionaire and talked just like one," just as if she were familiar with that gentry.

The message was sealed in a small envelope and addressed in feminine chirography. I tore it open at once and glanced at the bottom of the little sheet enclosed.

I could not suppress a start, for the surprise was greater than my capture by the green motor.

At the end of the brief epistle in a cramped hand was written the name "Thaddora," and the girl asked me to come to her at once.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

I DID not doubt that my meeting with Thaddora was to be an eventful one. I had almost come to the conclusion that the solution of the Trevor mystery was to come through the elusive maid. What had come over her mind? Was she ready to disclose her secret and unburden herself? I would soon see.

I waited till the next day and then betook myself to the little house in Princess street to which I had tracked the girl. In response to my raps Thaddora opened the portal herself and stood before me. A change had come over her countenance. The old-time defiance was gone, and in its place rested an expression of humility if not repentance.

She led me into a small room dimly lighted and made sure to close the door. When she came back to me, after performing this cautionary service, there was a smile on her lips, and her eyes seemed to glow like fireflies.

"I have sent for you," she began. "I am going to die."

"You?" I exclaimed. "In the flush of life? No, no!"

She put forward one hand and rested it lightly on my knee.

"It is true; there is no escape. I have offended Vishnu. The brown avengers of the mysterious cult are on my trail. Listen. I fell into the power of Buddha in an evil moment. I have been a slave of the old god as represented by Saidi Si. God help me, I have invaded the precincts of the mystic temple without orders. The penalty is death."

I hung upon her every word, certain that the great disclosure was coming.

"Sebastian Trevor, my old master, is a genius," she resumed. "He surpasses all men whose brains make them great. Do you know his secret? He has brought forth from the recesses of his brain an invention destined perhaps to end the war. Germany wants it. Germany must have it, and she is now straining every nerve to become its possessor. I can now see through the designs of the plotters. I now know how their coils have encircled me, and why? I could help Germany to her victory. That which Saidi Si could not obtain from Sebastian Trevor he would get through me. My former master with the withered hand, which is still a power for strength and agility, resists the demon of India. He cannot be robbed of his secret. All the arts of darkness fail when pitted against his will.

"I was selected to accomplish what the conspirators have failed to do. I was to steal the model of Sebastian Trevor's invention. Nightly I watched him in his workshop, nightly, when Miss Honore thought me abed, my eyes were on the alert. I saw the withered hand as nimble as its mate. It was wonderful what will power he has! At last the invention was perfected. I saw him pack it carefully and carry it from the house. I knew he had another workshop at Edgecliff, the house in the woods. Goaded by my masters, I sought that place, but we met there before I could rob him of the model. I now thank you for your interference. I would have been a thief but for that confrontation; I would have robbed my government of the new ally which had come from the fertile brain of Trevor. Now I am going to break the bonds of evil and be myself once more. I know that I will be marked, that the oath I have taken dooms me the moment it is broken. You know nothing of the dread penalty. Nothing of the cord and the Perfumed Death——"

I shuddered involuntarily, remembering my adventure in the house in the woods, and broke in as she paused:

"I have seen the three vases and the burning cord. I know what the Perfumed Death means, Thaddora."

"It is everlasting oblivion," she exclaimed. "The other night when I encountered you in the mystic temple I was going to report to Saidi Si. Our meeting sent me away without accomplishing my object. How you got into the temple I do not know, but you detectives go everywhere. Sebastian Trevor, as I declared then, is not there. When he left his home for the last time he simply vanished. It was as though he were consumed by the mystic fires of the cult that leave no trace."

"Then you believe that Sebastian Trevor has ceased to exist?" I cried.

"So far as the outer world is concerned, yes," Thaddora replied. "There is, I am sure, another Sebastian Trevor somewhere. But it is not the old one. You will find it so when you get to the end of your trail, if you ever do. I can say no more. My story is done and, if you can extract any hope from it, take it and welcome."

The girl fell back in her chair exhausted. Her breath came in little gasps; her hands opened and closed spasmodically, and her eyelids were welded as if she slept.

I looked at her in silence. She was no ordinary creature and, while I regarded her, I remembered Honore's mention that she was a somnambulist. I was about to shake her back into life when the eyes opened and, with a perceptible tremor, she became fully awake.

"What have I said to you?" she asked. "What have we been talking about, and why are you here?"

"I came in answer to your bidding, and we have been discussing the disappearance of Sebastian Trevor," was my reply.

"I don't remember. I know nothing of Sebastian Trevor. I don't even recall the name," and her lips came together with a sudden snap.

I was too surprised to speak. Thaddora was a creature with two mysterious minds. She was the possessor of a double consciousness, a victim of dangerous and secret power, and she was to be pitied.

When she slowly rose to her feet and looked down upon me with wondering eyes I saw in them a fear and terror that were startling.

"Will you go away now?" she asked. "I will let you out. I am happy here in this quiet place, and I have forgotten many things—forever."

"I will go. Then you don't know where Sebastian Trevor has hidden his invention, nor where the man is himself?"

"I never knew the man, and why should I know about the thing he has made?"

She opened the inner door and let me into the outer hall when suddenly she threw her hands to her face and covered it as if to shut out a sight she had just seen. I left her there against the wall, shuddering in every fibre of her body, obsessed by a fate unseen.

After all I had not gained much. Beyond meeting one of the strangest women in the world my visit was fruitless, and I would go back to the old trail, and this trail led to Edgecliff.

It was night when I alighted at the secluded station, having had but few companions on my way, and the last had left the coach some distance back. Involuntarily I looked around for Orson Tang, but he did not reward me. For once he was not on guard, but this did not matter, for I wished to make my investigations in secret. The path leading to the house in the woods was not hard to find, and I soon set forth.

This time I would not quit the spot until I had found the model of Sebastian Trevor's submarine, if not some clue to the master himself. In my mind I was still dis-

cussing Thaddora, wondering what fate would finally overtake her, and whether she would long escape the vengeance of the dark men whose master she had disobeyed.

All at once I heard the barking of a dog, and I thought of the lank hound I had seen at Orson Tang's heel. I stopped, expecting the man to come up, but the noise died away and he did not come.

A little stir among the dry leaves sent my hand to my weapon, and I made out the dog, which had reached me and was rubbing her cold nose against my leg. It was Orson's hound sure enough.

There was a weirdness in our meeting under the tangle of trees and the wild bramble, and I patted the animal on the head to still my fluttering heart more than anything else. The dog responded.

I resumed my journey with the hound at my heels and soon came in sight of the house itself. What new adventures awaited me behind its somber walls? Surely, I was not to meet the four Hindus with the Perfumed Death and other perils.

Suddenly I was startled by the actions of the dog. She sniffed the ground and lifted her pointed nose to me, asking a mute question with her bulging eyes. A moment later she described a little circle, only to return to me and ask the same question she had asked before.

Some one had lately been to the lone house in the woods, some disagreeable body to which the dog objected. But perhaps her master could answer.

I crossed the veranda which ran along the front of the house and turned the knob. A moment later I was inside, a flashlight in my hand.

Across the threshold I came to a sudden halt. Something was lying on the floor at my very feet, and I had already found it.

The discovery was followed by a lowering of the light and the fixing of its beams upon the obstruction. The next moment I fell back with a cry.

At my feet, and stretched at full length on the floor, I beheld the body of Orson Tang!

CHAPTER TWELVE

A THRILL of horror ran through me as I made the startling discovery. My first thought was that the brown men, the spies of Saidi Si, had been there, and, having worked their purpose, had gone away. The hound had slipped away and I could hear her baying in the woods. At last I pulled myself together and bent over the body on the floor. It was warm and yielded to my touch, and, taking hope at this, I bore it to a chair and sought to bring the victim of India deviltry back to life.

After a long while, for minutes seemed hours then, hope was quickened by seeing the eyes unclose, and presently Orson Tang looked up into my face.

"Did the dark devils find the secret?" he asked.

"You must answer that question for yourself," said I. "I could never find the hidden slide."

He staggered to his feet and began his search. I watched him with bated breath.

I heard his ejaculation of victory as the little door slid open and bounded to his side.

The niche was empty; the model of the precious submarine was gone!

We stood for a moment, looking into each other's eyes, too stunned to speak.

"It is not here," said Orson Tang. "I feared it."

"Germany has won out!"

"What has Germany got to do with this?" he gasped.

"Everything," I answered. "Germany has strained every nerve through her hellish agents to rob Sebastian Trevor of his invention. But when did the fiends come?"

A grim smile overspread the man's face.

"I was out in the woods with the hound when I concluded to enter the house to see whether all was right here. Barely had I entered this room when a cord was thrown around my neck and drawn tightly like a murderer's noose. I was in the grip of the little men who must see in the dark. I lost consciousness in an instant. That is all, sir. It is a short story."

A short story and as briefly told. With the aid of my flashlight I examined the niche, but to no more purpose than to confirm my first look.

"I am going back," said I. "The trail is not here. I can find it."

"It's at the risk of your life, sir. The trail is now the devil's path," said Orson Tang.

I assented with a glance.

Half an hour later I was on the road back to the city in the same car which had brought me to the hated ground. I was eager to cross swords with the agents of the kaiser and, obsessed with this overpowering desire, I kept awake. The train, as it jolted along, seemed to have the motions of the proverbial snail. A mile seemed a league, minutes eternity.

When I stepped at last upon terra firma the first signs of dawn were in the East. The eventful night was spent, and I seemed farther from final victory than when I began the hunt for the missing inventor.

Yes, the mystery appeared deeper than ever, but this only nerved me anew. This time Thaddora was not in the game, and her strange confession and its subsequent denial made me pause.

As I had not reported progress for some days I went forthwith to headquarters. I fancied the chief read disappointment in my face. He was a quiet sort of old man who said but little, leaving talk to his subordinates, and it was some time before I found my tongue.

He listened to my story without comment, and then said in his quiet way:

"You have lost for the present. The government officials are getting impatient. They seem to want everything at once. We must strike at the fountain head before Germany can make capital out of its last coup."

"We will strike!" I cried. "I am ready."

Gratified by my promise, though not wholly satisfied, I was dismissed. I had barely left headquarters when I noticed a green motor car dash by. Lolling back in the hindmost seat was a figure which I recognized with a thrill. Clad in his quaint costume, with his serpent eyes half-closed, lay Saidi Si, the bane of my existence. All my blood seemed to rush to a common center upon this discovery and, hailing a taxi, I started in swift yet careful pursuit.

"The green car yonder!" cried I. "Don't lose sight of it for a moment."

Evidently the Brahmin was taking a morning spin for pleasure, for he seemed to have no special goal in view, and we followed the green car for a long time. Through the park it dashed with its mysterious passenger, then out into the city again till I thought I should never find it quiet.

But all trails have an end, and at last I beheld the green motor drawn up in front of a pretentious edifice in the wealthy quarter. Here seemed the beginning of a new tangle. What could the Brahmin be doing on that ground? Saidi Si leaped to the pavement with the nimbleness of a panther and ran up the lion-guarded steps and disappeared.

I bad the taxi driver draw off a space, and from there I watched. The time seemed interminable, but at last the slender form of the cat of India emerged from the house and again entered the green motor.

There was another chase, but not so long, for I saw the car turn into the street which led to the Temple of Siva and knew that he had gone back to his lair.

It did not take me long to ascertain who inhabited the house visited by the Brahmin, and I uttered a little exclamation of surprise at the discovery I had made. Segrid Heiderburg was a German, though not yet counted an alien enemy. He had the confidence of the business, dealt heavily in securities, and, therefore, was not suspected of treason.

He lived alone save for a retinue of servants, and had at

his command all the wealth that makes life enjoyable. But what cord united him with Saidi Si? Why had the cat of India called upon him so soon after the robbery at Edgecliff? Here was another Gordian tangle.

I wrestled with the inscrutable problem till my brain swam, and at the end of the task I went downtown. Exhausted with the events of the night, I wanted a place of quiet to think the whole matter over. I dropped into a little grill-room for an undisturbed breakfast while I still thought. Seated at one of the most obscure tables was a man whom I instantly recognized, Jason Eyer, whom I had not seen since my adventures in the Temple of Siva. Without ado I crossed over to him, and was rewarded with a startled look.

"It seems to me," said Jason, "you needed help when I turned up."

"I don't quite understand."

"Well, you have a grip like a vise. You nearly killed me."

"Why?"

"When you caught me in the corridor under the cot in the strange house I thought I was done for."

"It was you, then?"

"I can prove that by the marks on my throat," he smiled. "It was I who lifted the cot and let you into the lower regions. When I came back with my light you pounced upon me with the fury of a tiger, and I saw all the planets before I lapsed into insensibility."

"You have my thanks accompanied by profound apologies," whereat his sallow face was illumined by a smile.

He glanced swiftly around the room and, not seeing any one whom he seemed to suspect, leaned across the table and lowered his voice to the confines of a whisper.

"I am going to get out of the hellish snare, that is, if they will let me," he went on. "I have seen enough of the cult. It is in the pay of Germany."

"And to all intents it has delivered the goods. The model in the house in the woods is gone."

Jason fell back in his chair breathlessly.

"So soon?" with a horrified gasp. "Don't tell me how it vanished. I know. The dark men came for it."

"And it is now in the hands of the master plotter."

"Yes."

"What, if anything, has Segrid Heiderburg got to do with the mystery?"

"What's that?" exclaimed Jason Eyer. "What do you know of the rich German?"

His question brought out my adventure with the green motor which I narrated in detail, and he hung upon every word with bated breath.

"Do you recall your adventure in the Temple of Siva? You saw from your lofty perch a masked man led into the presence of the Brahmin chief."

"Yes, and you said that that man was not Sebastian Trevor."

"And I spoke the truth. Can you guess who he was?"

"Segrid Heiderburg?"

The look I received from Jason Eyer was enough.

"Now that I am going to get out of the weird tangle with my whole skin I may enlighten you. Segrid Heiderburg is playing a deep and double game. He is really the master spirit of the German plot. I fancy henceforward you must deal with this wolf in sheep's clothing. If I would venture a guess the model of the submarine is now in the German's hands."

"And the mystery of Sebastian Trevor as well."

"You have spoken," answered Jason Eyer, and lapsed into silence.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

MY meeting with Jason Eyer and his revelations were enough to startle me. I seemed to be confronted by a new labyrinth, a maze within a maze. I felt that I was no longer to have the aid of the man I had just left. He was going to get out of the game, impelled by the shadow of fear as represented by the conspirators. Jason Eyer now feared for his life. He was on dangerous ground. As to Segrid Heiderburg he might be more dangerous than the Hindu octopus, more resourceful than Saidi Si with all the latter's secret villainy. If the model of the submarine had really fallen into the German's hands it might already be on its way to the man who was to profit by it, William Hohenzollern. I confess I was stunned by the new turn of affairs.

The recovery of the invention for which officials were impatiently waiting was as important as the discovery of Sebastian Trevor. Quick and drastic action was necessary. But where was I to begin and how? Certain words which had fallen from Thaddora's lips came to me with terrific force. "There is another Sebastian Trevor. The old one had ceased to exist. You will find it so when you get to the end of your trail, if you ever do." What did this strange girl mean? What did she really know? If she had transgressed the laws of Vishnu and Siva and placed herself under the ban she was doomed.

For a long time I took counsel with myself. I sat dazed by the new complications that confronted me! Expose Segrid Heiderburg on only the suspicions that had been aroused I dared not on my own initiative. Yet I must act. The crisis had come and a real peril menaced my country, so I resolved to fight it out.

In the perplexity of the situation I presented myself at the house in Albert avenue. There a startling surprise awaited me. Honore Trevor was gone! The new maid, Olive, Thaddora's successor, was in full and undisturbed possession of the elegant home. Honore, distraught, overwhelmed by the great mystery, had sought rest in flight. I was loath to censure her. The poor girl was not herself. It was well that she did not know of the theft of the submarine, that she could not see in the workings of the gigantic plot the subtle hand of Heiderburg. And this man, rolling in the wealth of Midas, was trusted by all. For me to charge him with being Germany's agent would subject me to ridicule.

I therefore for the present put aside all thoughts of Saidi Si and his wiry brown devils, even forgot for a moment that such a man as Sebastian Trevor ever existed and started out on a new tack.

The missing model was the thing now. The trail of it would lead me back eventually to the missing man.

It would be difficult for me to cultivate the acquaintance of the rich German, but I resolved to make the attempt. The next day I rang his bell, marching boldly up the steps guarded by two couchant lions. A butler in uniform opened the door and eyed me as if I had just emerged from prison arrayed in a convict's garb. The card which I thrust into his slender paws before he could close the door held his eye, and when I said I had business with his master he trotted off with it.

Presently he returned in a more obsequious manner and informed me that his lordship would grant me audience, whereat I followed him into a sumptuous apartment where the bulk of Segrid Heiderburg reclined in a chair. A pair of sea-green eyes instantly fastened their baleful light upon me, and for a moment I was transfixed by them. The German was a man of fifty, ponderous, rudy and quick of perception.

He twisted my card in his hands like he would twist the neck of a dove, glancing from it to my face. It was some seconds before he spoke, and then his voice told me that I was dealing with a remarkable man.

"What is it?" he asked with a decidedly foreign accent. "Why have you come?"

"I am seeking employment. You do not need a secretary?"

He hesitated, looked me over again, and coughed.

"I might have use for a man of your sort," he said. "Whence do you come?"

"From nowhere in particular. I have served at my calling in other cities, but of late have been at leisure."

All at once he flung the card upon the table and rose to his feet. He took several turns about the room followed by my eyes, and finally came back to his chair.

"I do need a secretary," he said in a milder tone. "What of your ancestry?"

"It is German. From Brunswick."

"Yes? My father was a good Brunswicker. Well, I think we will get along."

And my desperate plan had succeeded.

I knew that I was in the lion's den, and that the head beast was my master.

My first duties were not onerous. I was set to work arranging some, to me, unimportant papers while my employer slipped out of the room. When I had finished my task I lounged back in my chair and looked around. A huge steel safe stood in one corner of the room and held my eye from the first glance. Did it contain the stolen submarine? My heart went into my throat at the thought.

Segrid Heiderburg was gone a long time. The dusk was settling down and the butler came in and switched on the roseate light. He merely glanced at me and went out.

"Nothing more for today," began the German. "You will find Jacob on the landing, and he will show you to your room. Good-night."

The butler tramped ahead of me up the broad staircase, and without a single word bowed me into a small, well-furnished room, shutting the portal after me. As his footsteps died away I turned and found that he had locked the door!

A door flew open at one side of the room, and a man leaped in with a roar. It was Sebastian Trevor!

The Teutonic lion was going to take good care of the American lamb who had come to his lair. I laughed at thought of the precaution.

Locked up in a house, the interior of which was totally unfamiliar to me, I reflected over the situation. Shutting me in my quarters, suggested fear on Segrid Heiderburg's part, or that he was going to have some visitors who were not destined for my eyes.

An hour later I was aroused by the whir of a motor car outside the house. It came to a sudden stop, for the noise ceased abruptly.

In my eagerness I tugged at the door, but in vain. I was a prisoner. The situation was so full of mystery and fear that I felt my blood tingle. Who had come to the house in the car? And was it a green one?

In looking up I saw that the transom was unusually wide and convenient. My body was slender and active, and this suggested a dangerous adventure. Lifting myself alongside the door I was soon squirming my figure through the transom, and presently I dropped safely to the floor. The corridor without was almost dark, but I could perceive the head of the stair and made for it.

The steps were carpeted with Brussels that yielded noiselessly to my feet, while below the flight I saw that the hall light had been dimmed.

Silence prevailed below me, and the only sound that came to my ears was the passage of a motor car. On the left, in the lower hall, was the door through which I had passed to the German's presence, but it was transomeless. Disappointed by this unwelcome discovery, I bit my lips.

I dared not go down for closer investigation for fear I should face the owl-faced butler, although I prayed that he had retired for the night to the security of his apartment. I therefore kept my position for a few moments, hugging the somber wall and wishing that it would bend and take me with it.

A murmur of voices came through the closed door at last, but it was only a murmur.

That the person whom the motor had brought to the house was closeted with Segrid Heiderburg I did not doubt. I imagined whom that person was, and fancied I could see him in close proximity to the German.

The strain of the long watching grew on me. I shifted from one position to another.

At last I heard the click of a key, and the door slowly opened. As the light suddenly streamed into the hall I shrank farther back against the wall and held my breath.

A figure appeared before my vision and then another. I regarded with closer scrutiny the first more than the second. It was the slender serpentine form of Saidi Si, the arch demon of the Temple of Siva, and his face wore a satisfied grin. He was taller than Segrid Heiderburg, and as his dark face was uplifted as if searching the stair, I involuntarily drew back.

But his deep, dark eyes were lowered as suddenly as they had been lifted, for the German had spoken.

"Everything is arranged to the minutest particular. Give yourself no uneasiness on that score," said Heiderburg, reassuringly. "What Germany gets she holds, and all the powers of the enemy cannot dispossess her. Within three days we reap the victory; we pluck the grapes and enjoy the golden wine. All America is not strong enough to thwart us! We have won the toss!"

The next moment the Brahmin was gone.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I RETURNED to my new quarters thrilled by what I had witnessed. That the invention destined to accomplish wonders in undersea warfare had passed into the possession of the cabal I was certain. In three days, if I had rightly interpreted Segrid Heiderburg's boast, it would be forever beyond my reach and the object of the enemy accomplished. The thought was maddening.

Before sleep closed my eyes I heard the click of a lock and knew that Jacob had come back. His previous action was no longer a mystery. In anticipation of the Brahmin's

visit my new employer had made sure there was to be no spying on my part, and now that the secret conference was ended, I was no longer a prisoner.

The following day I resumed my clerical duties in the room where the steel safe stood. My knowledge of German, acquired during boyhood, now stood me well in need, and Segrid Heiderburg and I got along famously. Some inward thought seemed to delight him. His manner changed from coldness to warmth, and if I could have gotten rid of the thought that he was my country's foe, I would have found him really agreeable.

Rising suddenly from the table, he went over to the safe and, after working the combination deliberately for a spell, threw the door open. My heart was in my throat as I covertly watched him. Would I catch sight of the miniature submarine? Doubting not that it nestled behind the barricade of steel, I quickly made up my mind. I would win by a *coup de main*, staking everything on the dice of fate. If the invention was in the safe my new job would end like a flash. I would leap forward, wrench Trevor's masterpiece from the thief's custody and bolt from the house before he could balk me.

As the steel door swung open, disclosing the whole interior of the German's treasure box, my hopes sank to the lowest level. The precious invention was not there! I had risen from my chair with every nerve at tension, and Segrid Heiderburg never knew how near he was to death, for I had resolved to rob him of the prize, even at the risk of taking human life.

But the end was not yet.

A few moments later I was alone in the room, but not for long. I heard the door pulled ajar and, to my astonishment, the curly head of a little boy sheepishly appeared. His big brown eyes regarded me with curiosity, then, as if he had nothing to fear, he glided forward. He was a pretty child of four, with a trustful face which wore a happy smile. I held out my hands to him, and he responded by cuddling up in my lap.

"Whose boy?" I asked.

"Uncle Grid's. Do you know him?"

"I am his secretary. We will get along famously together."

"I already like you," the child answered, and put his arms about my neck. "This is a big house with many, many rooms, but they won't let me play in all of them. I used to romp in the big room upstairs till the old man came——"

"The old man?" I interrupted.

"Yes, the old man they won't let out. I have seen him but once, and then for just a minute. He came some time ago, in the night and has been here ever since. You don't know him?"

"No, I don't know the old man."

"Jacob watches over him and chases me away whenever I go near the door. It's funny, don't you think, that he stays in the one room?"

What could I say? A thought that burned into my brain made me forget the sweet face that nestled in my lap with its waving curls. Was Sebastian Trevor the "old man"? Was I so near the missing inventor who had started me upon the most mysterious trail of my life? Thaddora had declared that he was not in the Temple of Siva, Jason Eyer had confirmed the girl's words, and I was startled.

"Will you show me where he is?" I queried.

"There is Jacob," said the child, drawing back. "Jacob is a cat, always watching. I don't like Jacob," and a look of repulsion chased the sunshine from the boy's face. "It is in the big room on the other side of the house. You mustn't go there, for Jacob has eyes, eyes that see everything."

The child soon fell asleep in my embrace, but thought kept me wide awake. For the nonce I forgot even the stolen model and thought only of the "old man" on "the other side of the house." After a while my little charge slipped to the floor and toddled from the room.

Segrid Heiderburg did not honor me with his presence till near dusk. He came back with some work for me which, after explanations, he left in my sole care. I saw the darkness come upon the city, and then the thousand-and-one lights began to glow.

The big house grew solemnly still. I put my completed task away and went up to my chamber. This time I did not have the irrepressible Jacob at my heels, Cerberus-like, to lock me in.

A nearby clock struck off the snail-like hours. Time certainly was measuring his speed on leaden wings. At last I heard the tones of midnight and cautiously opened my door. There were shadows down the corridor, shadows that would screen a human form, and I entered them. I would solve the mystery of the old man in the house, the man who was shut in for some mysterious reason, and if he was Sebastian Trevor the coil would lose a prisoner.

I passed through a long hall that seemed endless, perhaps because of its dead silence, my footsteps making no sound as I advanced, and I did not seem to breathe.

I reached a door at the end of the corridor and stopped there. I seemed very near the end of my quest. All at once a slight sound fell upon my strained ears. Some one was in the same hall. Though I could not see any one, I felt that some one was lurking within a few feet of me. A minute later a form came out of the shadow—indistinct at first, but plainly seen in the end. To step back was the work of a moment. I obeyed the first impulse that rose in my mind.

On came the figure until it stood at the closed door, a giant in bulk, with the noiseless tread of the cat. It was not Jacob nor his next of kin, but Jacob's master, the German.

He took from his pocket a key with which he opened the door and slipped into the forbidden chamber. He closed the portal behind and my ears caught the sound of a lock.

Immediately there was the sound of muffled voices, a little ejaculation of surprise then a long silence. The German did not remain long in the room, but appeared so suddenly that I feared he had caught sight of me.

My hands itched to clutch his throat and choke from him the portentous secret I believe he guarded. When he paced off down the hall and vanished I was relieved. What had he done in that room, and who had he met?

Believing that Jacob, the watch-dog, would come, I followed and saw him go down the main stairway and enter the library. An arrow of light which shot from the keyhole assured me that he was settled for a while, therefore I could turn back to the closed portal.

Once more I reached the room that held the new mystery and listened. Not a sound came from the other side of the door. With the theft of Trevor's model and it safe in Germany's hands, had Segrid Heiderburg put a dangerous man out of the game forever?

Fancying that I was now secure in my investigations I laid my hand on the knob. Quick ears must have caught the sound, for there was a movement on the opposite side of the door, footsteps came forward and paused, then receded and came on again, as if the maker was worried, confused by doubts.

At that moment of uncertainty I turned my head and saw between me and the city's lights beyond the farther end of the corridor two objects that were as stationary as statues. They would have been human in shape had it not been for their ogreishness, and a cold chill swept through me as I centered them with staring eyes.

Almost instantly they increased in size, and I saw that they were creeping down the corridor, noiseless, panther-like, veritable demons in black.

I could not retreat, for I stood at the end of my run, with a solid wall behind me and a locked door to my left. I could only wait for the denouement.

Nearer came the specters, sliding along the floor, keeping grimly together as though, like wolves, they were hunting in pairs, and their very silence grew upon me chill by chill.

If I had been seen they made no sign. I was caught in

a trap of my own making, not for the first time, as the reader already knows, and I bit my lips when I thought of it.

But this scene could not last always. There must be an ending; the moving figures now plainly visible continued their slow advance.

Suddenly I saw what I had not seen before. I noticed the turbans that sat upon the heads of the silent monsters, and then I uttered an inward cry.

They were the men of the Coil, the mysterious beings of India and the night, the demons of the Perfumed Death and the Cord.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I BRACED myself for the encounter that was unavoidable and, as the enemy prepared for the spring, I launched myself forward and fell upon them. Instantly there was a meeting that tested all our nerve, for we were in a grapple of life and death. The sinuous legs of the Hindus entwined me like the folds of a serpent, their arms encircled my body and gave me but little chance to get at their throats. That they intended to strangle me was apparent from the first, but I managed to balk them in this, and by desperate efforts threw off their villainous coils till, for a moment at least, I was free.

Headlong down the corridor I plunged and reached the stair with the dark men panting at my heels. The situation lent speed to my limbs; I seemed to take the steps in a single jump and, landing at the bottom on my feet, found the door. Wrenching for a moment at it I threw it wide and bounded from the German's house. My duties as Herr Heiderburg's secretary were forever ended. The cool air of the night came as a blessing to me after the battle, and I made off.

I could imagine the discomfiture of my foes, their report to their master and his astonishment; but this was all swept away by my triumph. I made my way to my den where I found several letters on my table. Picking up the first one, I was thrilled by the chirography of the address, and hastily, almost breathlessly, tore it open.

It had been posted from a little hamlet not far from the city but the day before, and read as follows:

"MY DEAR MR. GRAYSON: I believe it my duty to acquaint you with my present whereabouts and of the strange events that have followed my flight. You know all about the invasion of the house by the men who caught and bound Olive, my new maid, in the chair. This was the cause of my terror and I determined to go away for rest and thought. Last night, while abroad for a walk, I suddenly chanced upon Thaddora. How she ever came here and for what purpose is one of the secrets she persists in keeping to herself. Seeing that she could not avoid me, for I came upon her without notice, she came forward. She is not the Thaddora of old, for she is overshadowed by some dreadful fear, looks around all the time and starts at the slightest noise.

"When I had quieted her somewhat she became a little communicative and told, in part, something of her late past. It seems that she had fallen into the power of Saidi Si, the Hindu, and had embraced the tenets of his dark religion. The girl, I fear, was as clay in the hands of that wily demon. Thaddora, it seems, in some manner broke the oath she had taken, and fears the vengeance of "the dark men of the cord," as she calls the Hindus. She confessed that she was set to watch Uncle Trevor and to steal the invention he was at work upon. I believe from what she said she even went to Edgecliff to carry out her fell designs, but was prevented by some one. Every now and then the distracted girl goes into a singular trance, and when she comes out of it denies what she has disclosed. I don't know what to make of her. I believe she knows what has become of Uncle Trevor. Once she went so far as to say that he was not in the mysterious Temple of Siva, presided over, as you know, by Saidi Si, and when I thought she was on the fringe of the real secret she lapsed into unconsciousness. At one time she mentioned a well-known German named Segrid Heiderburg whom she says is as powerful as the Hindu; but where he lives she would not tell.

"I have given the girl a part of my apartment and will watch over her. If you could see her you might worm all her secrets out of her, but it is beyond my power to do so. I believe if we could assure the poor girl that she is perfectly safe from Bhahmin deviltry and vengeance her lips would be unsealed, and we might clear up the strange mystery which now confronts us. If you can come to me inquire for Miss Osborne and maid, and we will see what we can do. Action should be as prompt as you see fit to make it, for I may lose Thaddora at any time. I am well, but this awful suspense and mystery are trying on one's nerves. Respectfully, HONORE TREVOR."

I laid the letter down with a smile and picked up the other one lying on the table.

It was of an entirely different complexion, and as brief as it was annoying:

"GRAYSON: The government is getting out of all patience. Sebastian Trevor and his invention must be found at once. GORANS."

I threw the letter to the floor and growled. It is easy to command, but difficult to execute. I bit my lips over the official's insistence, yet I could not find fault with it. Washington did not know what I had to contend with. It did not know that I had to combat the cunning of the German government—the power of the kaiser. It had no intimation that the brain of the craftiest of Brahmins was against me, nor that Segrid Heiderburg was in Teuton pay.

When I returned in thought to my last adventures in the German's house I remembered the steel safe which had baffled me. I was amazed. Had not my stay under that roof been cut short by the two Hindus I might have forced the door of the forbidden room and penetrated to its secrets.

That golden opportunity was past now. It would be death for me in any disguise to cross the threshold of Herr Heiderburg's domicile, for would not the turbanned watches be on guard, ready with dagger or cord to put me out of the game forever?

I resolved to obey Miss Trevor's call and deal once more with Thaddora.

Hampden was a little inland town not two hours' ride from the busy city. Its one street was wide and clustering with shade trees that gave it a romantic appearance. The post-office which occupied the center of town attracted me as a bureau of information, and there I inquired for "Miss Osborne and maid." I was directed to the last house at the end of the street, a pleasing little frame cottage, with vines half concealing the doorway, and my knock ushered me into Honore's presence.

The moment she spied me she lifted a finger to her lips and took a step forward.

"I have lost the habit of speaking loud since I came here," she said, lowering her voice. "More strange things have taken place since I posted my letter, which I see you got. The dark men are here! They came last night. Heaven knows why they struck the girl's trail—or mine."

I was dumbfounded for a moment, yet when I thought the surprise vanished. The hindu devils were capable of anything.

"Does Thaddora know?" I asked as Honore paused.

"I don't know. I encountered one of the spies last night and avoided him. There are two of them. What cats they are, noiseless, wily, cool! Thaddora is asleep. I looked in upon her just before you came and found her lying on her bed in a deep slumber. She hasn't walked in her sleep since she came down here. She is calm only at times, when the shadow of fear is not over her, but all at once it

comes back and then she is another person. She seems to possess two distinct natures, poor child!"

At this we sat down and talked over my adventures since I last saw her. She was interested in my dealings with Segrid Heiderburg, and my trip to the house in the woods after the invention when I found the lifeless body of Orson Tang on the floor.

"I believe a search of that locked room in the German's house would have picked up one of the tangled threads of your skein," she said. "Whether it would have disclosed Uncle Trevor's whereabouts is another question. For the present the model of his invention has passed beyond us. I fear ere now it is on its way to the enemy who will profit by it. He will adopt Uncle Trevor's ideas and fill the seas with new means of destruction."

All at once we heard the knob of the door turn and the willowy figure of Thaddora made its appearance. The girl was in a trance. Her eyes were wide open, yet she saw not, and Honore and I, with a swift glance at our startled selves, fixed our gaze upon the somnambulist.

Thaddora held us for a moment spellbound in our seats and then she closed the door. We were on our feet in an instant, but the sleep walker had already left the house. I opened the front door and descried a figure moving away in the soft moonlight slowly, with head erect and admirably poised.

I looked at my companion and followed. Honore, with bated breath, threw herself at my heels. Thaddora led us down under the trees that shaded the rambling street, never looking back nor seeming to listen in fear of anything.

Suddenly both of us came to a halt and recoiled. Another figure was on the trail; it had injected its dark presence between us and the girl, and the moment I saw it I uttered a cry.

"What?" trembled upon Honore's lips.

"The Hindu." I interrupted as my hand closed upon her arm, and my clutch and look instantly silenced her.

Never tiger stalked his prey in the jungle with more consummate cunning than did this man in the devil's brown. He had eyes for nothing but the helpless girl who might carry in her bosom the secrets of Germany. His tread was cat-like, his sinuous body bent forward; he had all the movements of the Eastern thug.

I looked at Honore; she was pallid with terror, and then I turned to the other scene. The cat by this time was within a few feet of his prey; he had but to thrust out his long arms and seize her.

I did not wait for more, but with a bound covered the space between me and the Hindu, and in a trice my hands went around his throat and I was choking him into an inert mass.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

I NEVER minded how the dark-brown devil squirmed under my maddened grip. Nothing I thought was too good for him, so I held on till he was ready to slip from my hands completely done for. Meantime Thaddora had moved on in somnambulistic slumber, and when I glanced at the silent and terrified Honore the maid had almost passed out of sight.

We left the Hindu crumpled on the sward and followed. The girl suddenly turned back and we stepped aside to let her pass. She did not see the terror who had nearly finished her, but continued her walk to the cottage which she entered, going straight to her room without pause.

We did not disturb her that night, but early in the morning, when I thought she was herself once more. I returned to the cottage. I had passed the night in the only inn in the village, a quiet affair, and rose refreshed for the work of the day.

Thaddora came downstairs at Honore's call and stopped suddenly when her eyes fell upon me. I tried in vain to read her thoughts and sought to guess how she would take my intrusion. That she remembered me was apparent. I was a person she could not forget.

"I fancied that I had escaped you," smiled the girl, which I accepted as a good omen that she would not be obstinate. "I am settled here and contented, and——"

She suddenly looked at Honore and paused.

"Yes, Thaddora, I will see that you are contented and safe in Hampden. We will both be contented in this out-of-the-way place. Mr. Grayson has come down here for a little rest, which I am sure he needs, after what he has passed through."

The deep, black eyes of the girl turned slowly to me and fixed their light upon my face.

"What have you discovered?" she questioned eagerly. "Have you found Sebastian Trevor?"

"Not exactly, for he persists in being elusive. But I have discovered Herr Heiderburg," and I watched the girl to see how she would take it.

There was a little start and a quick breath, and she leaned forward.

"Oh, the big man who came to Saidi Si," she exclaimed. "The German with the cat face."

"What do you know about him, Thaddora? Is he one of the Brahmin's dupes?"

She broke into a little laugh that sounded musically in the cramped room.

"Herr Heiderburg is the master," she cried. "He came to Saidi Si for a purpose. Do you know what that purpose is?"

We were getting along swimmingly with the strange mind, but there was no telling when she would go into her singular trance and deliberately balk all our efforts.

"I know that Sadi Si and Segrid Heiderburg are in the same game," I said. "They have the same goal—the vanishment of Sebastian Trevor and the theft of his great invention."

"That is it!" cried the girl. "They have accomplished the one, and if you don't watch, Mr. Detective, they will accomplish the other."

"What do you know of Herr Heiderburg, Thaddora?"

"More than I want to know. I have been to his house. How I got there I do not know. I know that I suddenly awoke there. It was in the night and the great house was still. I was terribly frightened. I saw things in that house, things that moved noiselessly and unnerved me. They were human-like and with the tread of cats. They seemed to guard the house, for they went about like prowling animals, and I crouched behind the great oak dresser in the room in which I found myself and shuddered, for I had seen those men before in the Temple of Siva. When they slipped out of my sight and were gone I locked the door to keep them out, but after a while curiosity got the better of me and I followed. Do you ever go to Herr Heiderburg's house? No? There is a room upstairs at the very end of the hall that is locked. I know, for I tried the door myself. It was foolish in me, but you know women. When I turned the knob of that door some one on the inside approached it. I heard the patter of feet distinctly. "Who is there?" said a man's voice. I was startled, and my heart was in my throat. I dared not reply, so frightened was I. It was not the voice of the dark men whom I had watched from behind the oak dresser; I know that. I had heard that same voice before, and in quite a different place," and the girl looked askance at Honore.

"It was in our house that you heard it, Thaddora?" she asked.

The maid nodded.

"It was Sebastian Trevor's voice!" she continued. "There was no doubt of it. I stood like a statue amid the dark silence of the narrow hall waiting for him to speak again, but waited in vain. No sound came from behind the forbidden door. Then fear of the creeping men obsessed me and I slunk away. Fortunately they did not hinder me as I passed to the lower floor and thence into the night. I fled. I ran from the house as if they were at my heels, the man-cats!" She laughed shudderingly. "I scampered as when I fled from you, Mr. Detective, when you surprised me in the house at Edgecliff. You may have

been in Segrid Heiderburg's house, but you haven't found the locked door."

I smiled enigmatically, hoping that the girl would go on.

A hurried glance from Honore told me that the mystic spell was working upon the maid, and presently her eyes closed and she fell back into the depths of the chair.

We waited for the return of reason, looking at one another and hoping for a continuation of her weird story when all at once she sat bolt upright and stared at us.

"Where was I at?" she queried in a voice apparently not her own.

"You were flying from a house to get beyond the reach of the men of the Cord," said Honore.

"Yes, yes. I remember now. The men of the Cord, my mates of the accused Temple of Siva. How did I get to Herr Heiderburg's house? That is the mystery which puzzles me. I often wake up and find myself in strange places, and I cannot account for it. But that was the only time I went to the house with the locked door in the corridor."

"But you went to Edgecliff that night wide awake," I said.

"I was myself then. I was not as one walking in a dream. I went there at the bidding of Saidi Si, and the brown men aided in my escape from you. They took me away with the speed of the wind and you did not catch me, ha, ha! What was Saidi Si looking for in the house in the tangle? What is that strange thing which has turned Sebastian Trevor's brain and which I have watched him at work over?"

"What is it like, Thaddora?"

"It is long like a little boat; that is all I know."

"And why did you watch your master?"

"I was to steal that strange thing and take it to the demon of the Temple."

I threw a hasty look at Honore.

Perhaps the time had come to test the girl's loyalty, and the answering glance I received from Honore sanctioned my resolution.

"You are not pro-German, girl?"

"Me for the horrid kaiser!" she cried, clinching her white hands. "Test me!"

"Wilhelm's arms have reached across the sea to cripple America. Saidi Si is his agent here, so is Segrid Heiderburg, so are the cat-men, as you call them. They want the thing which Sebastian Trevor has fashioned. It is intended for the destruction of Germany. It has fallen into their hands."

"Gone?" moaned Thaddora.

"It is no longer in the house in the woods. Already the first act of the German game is over."

"It cannot be," and Thaddora rose to her feet and threw her arms above her head. "And to think that I have been their tool! I could not resist the wiles of the man of the cursed cult. Almost helpless I fell into his power. God forgive me now!"

"He has pardoned you already, Thaddora," answered Honore from the depths of her heart. "You are out of the coil now and forever. You are free."

"But I have broken the law of Siva and the cat-men will take vengeance. I hear their tread in my sleep. I see them creeping upon me when awake. I tell you one never escapes the vengeance of mystic India."

A short time after this strange interview I left the cottage. I had learned enough to believe that the end of my search, so far as Sebastian Trevor was concerned, lay behind the closed door of the German's house. But where was his great invention?

The hand of the maid trembled in mine as I bade her good-by. I fervently hoped that a new life was dawning for Thaddora, that she was really beyond the coil; but hope is not always a certainty.

As I went down to the little station I looked about for the men of the Cord. Had I really finished the miscreant whom I caught on the track of the deluded girl?

No enemy was in sight, and when I reached the train and had cuddled up in a seat for a ride back to my hunting ground I saw a figure in a seat ahead.

The sight sent a thrill through every fiber of my being, for I got a glimpse of a brown skin and a head pillowed on a long, sinuous hand, and I knew that the Indian was riding with me.

A burning desire took possession of me. I wanted to look at the slender neck to see if it still bore the marks of my fingers.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

"A MAN is waiting in your room for you—a man and a dog."

These words from my landlady were the first that greeted me in the city.

I went up at once and found Orson Tang and his hound, Agnes, in full possession of my domain. The man from Edgecliff rose upon my entrance and came forward with rapid stride.

"He has come back!" he cried, before I could get my breath. "Withered Hand is back in his old haunt."

My stare must have frightened the man, but, recovering, he went on:

"He returned last night and is there now. He is not the same man he was. You should see him."

"Tell me all," said I in tones of command. "What does he do?"

"I found him in the lower room trying to pull himself together in a way. First, he goes to the empty niche, ransacks it, then staggers back to his chair and passes his hands across his forehead as if he were trying to pick up a missing link in memory's chain. I watched him for a long time. Life had been crushed out of him, I tell you. And the withered hand? He can use it as well as the other one!"

I listened to Orson Tang's short sentences like a man in a maze, and indeed I thought I was in one.

What was all this? Had Sebastian Trevor actually "found himself" like Kipling's ship?

"I will go at once. Come!"

I forgot everything in my eagerness but the man who had come back, and in a few minutes we were off. Never seemed a road so long as that one. Never were the minutes so tardy. We scarcely spoke during the journey.

But there is an end to all things. The deserted station of Edgecliff at last rose before me, haggard in its loneliness, ghostly in its surroundings.

We set out at once through the night and drew near the old house. Approaching the structure, we observed caution so as not to flush our game. Despite our care our footsteps sounded like pistol-shots on the porch. There was a glow in the lower room where I had encountered the four Hindus. We glided to the window and looked in.

He was there, seated at the table with a tracing paper under his hands and his fingers moving swiftly over it. The sliding door in the wall that had guarded the precious model was wide open disclosing nothing but emptiness. It was as though he had left it open in a moment of despair. But it was not the same face I had seen in the photograph in Honore's possession. It was a face which, once seen, was never to be forgotten. Sebastian Trevor had aged twenty years. I recalled Thaddora's words. "When you find him he will not be the old Sebastian Trevor," and it was so.

I was held spellbound by the apparition that confronted me. I imagined that I had looked upon the risen dead. I saw that he was using the withered hand with the facility of youth, bending with eagerness over the tracing paper before him and never raising his eyes for a single moment.

It seemed sacrilege to break the old man's dream, but now that one of the mysteries of the trail was solved I resolved to do so. I bounded to the door and laid my hand on the latch.

"Quick!" I heard Orson Tang gasp. "He is on his feet like a frightened deer."

I flung the door open, but the room was tenantless, nothing but the gaping hole in the wall where the invention

had been, and a sheet of blue paper on the table. The tracings were Greek to me, and I threw the paper down.

"Which way?" I cried to my companion.

Man and dog flew to a little door and thence into a room beyond. Vainly did we search the house in the woods. Sebastian Trevor had vanished as completely as though he had become thin air. We tried to take up his trail by the hound's aid, but she shrank back as if obsessed by supernatural fear, and we stood looking questioningly into each other's face, baffled.

I did not want to relinquish the trail. It might never be found again, and the night wore on in ceaseless efforts to recover it. Back into the old house we went, scouring it from top to bottom, looking into rooms which seemingly had not had a visitor for years, inspecting the most unhidable places only to confess failure at last.

Smarting under my defeat I paused at last. Had Trevor gone back to the city, back into the coils from which he had evidently escaped? And did Segrid Heiderburg know that the closed room had given up its captive?

I left Orson Tang on guard, he and the dog. I could return to the remaining mystery, the vanishing of the model which must now be in the German's hands, if not on its way to the arch beast beyond the sea.

Dead tired, and perplexed beyond endurance, I reached the maddening town. It was daylight now, and I wondered what the new dawn would bring forth. I passed the German's house on the home tramp and gave it a searching look. The great blinds were closed, the couchant lions seemed to mock my defeat, and over all hung a suggestion of emptiness.

I wanted a quiet hour for rest and thought. The end of the trail which I thought was in sight the moment I caught sight of Sebastian Trevor now seemed as distant as the pyramids.

I slept long and heavily, like one exhausted. I knew the office was grasping after results which had not been obtained; the Navy Department was nervous over the missing man and his great invention, and Germany must be correspondingly elated. It had won at last; the long and desperate hand of the kaiser had reached the goal, and I was in the discard.

The maddening thought spurred me to action. The disgrace of defeat heated my blood, and I left the house, determined to cast fortune or final overthrow in a desperate play of the cards of fate.

So thoroughly disguised that even the keen eyes of the men of the Cord and Herr Heiderburg could not penetrate my mask, I rang the bell of the German's house. A moment later footsteps rang in the hall, and the sea-green eyes of Jacob, the butler, peered out of their vasty depths at me.

"Your master?" I demanded.

The man recoiled, and a sinister smile illumined his sallow face.

"Herr Heiderburg is out of town," he answered. "He will not return for a week."

I pushed past the man, ignoring his outstretched arms and menacing visage. He turned upon me like a snarling beast, but I flung him aside.

"I'm going upstairs. Don't follow me!" I threatened, and in spite of him I bounded up the steps.

I knew the way to the long corridor of the little closed door. To my surprise it stood wide open. I stepped into the room; it had had a tenant lately, as I could see at a glance. There was a crumpled bed in one corner and a little table in the center. They told with silent emphasis of the last tenant's flight. My thoughts went back to my visit to the house in the woods and the old man I had seen there.

Back I went, chafing like a baffled beast. My blood seemed a lava current now. I took the stairs, three steps at a bound, and landed at the bottom.

"I guess you're satisfied by now," said a voice, at the sound of which I turned quickly and confronted the grinning butler.

His look was a taunt, his mien the acme of irritation; he leered at me with all the irony of hated victory.

My hands shot out and in an instant Jacob was pinned against the unyielding wall, gasping for breath. His whole body trembled like a leaf in a storm, and his bulging eyes accentuated the cowardliness of his nature.

"Where is your master? I am here for the truth, Jacob. Where is Herr Heiderburg?"

He stammered in his abject fear till his teeth chattered like castanets, and he tried to twist out of my iron grip.

"I—have—told—you——"

"But what you have said is a lie!"

"I never lie."

"Come into the library," I replied, and dragged him away. Among the costly furnishings of the lofty room I crushed him into a chair, white-faced and breathless, and stood over him.

In my rage I could have shaken every bone of the menial's body into a confused heap.

"You lie, and you know it! You are obeying the orders of your master. You have been left here to lie. For the moment I represent the United States Government. Now tell the truth!"

His eyes centered me with mingled viciousness and fear. I half-expected from him the sudden leap of a cornered tiger. But fear mastered his viciousness.

"Herr Heiderburg is on the high seas," he snarled. "If you want the truth, there you have it. Make the most of it you can."

On the high seas with the prize Germany wanted! Out of my reach with the model of Sebastian Trevor's discovery which was designed to destroy the Teuton's sea power! I recoiled at the words and felt my heart sink to measureless depths in my breast.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

BUT a sudden thought quickened me into life, and I whirled upon the quivering serf in the chair. I was not satisfied. Jacob's eyes fell at my look.

"When did your master sail?" I thundered.

"Yesterday."

"By what boat?"

"The *Valencia*."

"What baggage did he take along?"

"All he needed." The last words were couched in language between a snap and a snarl.

I was done. I left Jacob still white in his chair, glad, no doubt to be well rid of me, and hurried away. There seemed no sign of hope, but somehow or other I caught at something that might turn out a rainbow.

Straight to the piers I went and was greeted by a sight that sent a thrill through every nerve. There in her dock lay a big steamer, and on her side I read the name "*Valencia*." She had not sailed on schedule time, and upon inquiry at the customs I learned that investigation of her cargo was not complete. As we were not at war with Germany in 1915, passengers destined for that country had no difficulty in getting away.

Herr Heiderburg was still within reach, but where? I went aboard and inspected her passenger list, but without discovering a familiar name. The captain, to whom I told my business, said that no person answering my description of the German had booked, but that it was not too late, for the ship would not sail till the following day.

"Call the office at once if he books and eludes me," were my parting words. "It is a loss of millions to the government if that Hun escapes."

If Jacob's story was true Segrid Heiderburg was in hiding somewhere. He would not book till the last moment, and then probably under an assumed name. I sat down and thought rapidly. Where would he hide in the meantime? Evidently he was not in his own house. I was reasonably sure of this. Where, then, was he concealed with the loot which his cunning had taken from Sebastian Trevor?

In the mystic Temple of Siva? The thought startled me beyond expression. He would go to Saidi Si, his old

ally, and there remain under cover till the crucial moment. I sprang to my feet. There, under the roof of the Brahmin serpent, the German reptile would find shelter and secret refuge.

Must I risk my life among the men of the Cord once more? I felt it would be for the last time, come victory or defeat, but the exigencies of the hour demanded my sacrifice, the country demanded it, and I nerved myself for the last cast of the dice of fate.

But how to get within the walls of mystery and demonology was the question. I had been there, as the reader will recollect, under the guidance of Jason Eyer, but now I had no Jason to pilot me. He had renounced the terrible cult, and was out of my reach. I might spend hours searching the city for my friend and then lose out.

Rendered desperate by the situation, I resolved to face the Unknown, to enter the dark precincts to which only the initiated were admitted.

The mystic temple rose before me once more. As I approached it my spirits got new strength and I slipped into the outside niche, whither I had been led by Jason. The forbidden door was within arms' reach, and I regarded it for a few moments, not irresolute, but eagerly.

When I put out my hand the portal swung open as if by some hidden power, and the little corridor in which I had once crouched lay before me. Not a sound fell upon my ears. The very stillness seemed prophetic of doom. I knew that beyond that door lay all the mysteries of the Unknown, the dangers of the accursed cult, the shadow of the Cord, perhaps the vision of the Perfumed Death.

I advanced and tried the second portal; it yielded with the promptness of the first, and I was within the real shadow. The Temple seemed untenanted. A strange perfume saluted my nostrils; it permeated the whole place, pleasing, yet disgusting.

I ascended once more the incline to the gallery from which I had looked down upon the circular chamber upon the high priest of occultism and the men of the cat, as Thaddora called the four Hindus.

It was lit up by a roseate light that emanated from a swinging censor. But the circular chamber was deserted. I looked down upon the rich oriental carpets that covered the floor, carpets bearing portraits of the triad gods of Buddhism intertwined with serpents, chief of which was the deadly cobra. Everything was in keeping with the religion of the dark-skinned men of Benares and Calcutta. Did I wish to turn back? No. There was too much at stake.

What is one human life that is devoted to humanity and one's country? I thought of this as from a pillar I peered down into the depths redolent of mystery and doom.

Presently there came into the room without warning and from a hitherto unseen door the serpentine figure of Saidi Si. He was clad in garments which did not represent his mystic calling. The turban and the white robes were missing, but his peculiar gait, so like that of the hunting tiger of the Eastern jungles, would have unmasked him.

It was truly Saidi Si in borrowed plumes.

After him trailed the hunters of doom, the four Hindus, noiseless, slender and terrible. Then for the first time I knew I had not finished the dark-skinned tracker who I caught on the trail of Thaddora in the woods at Edgecliff. They were all below me, the terrible quartet.

It was strangely interesting to watch the Hindus and their genuflections in the presence of their master. They formed a ring around him as he sat on the ornamented divan and eyed them much as a lion-tamer eyes his obedient beasts.

But to my mind some one was missing from the group. There was another whom I expected to see within the temple of mystery, and he was not there.

My heart took a bound into my throat when the little door opened once more, for Segrid Heiderburg appeared. I had found the German's nest! After all, he had gone to the very place designed for him till the *Valencia* sailed.

Herr Heiderburg was not disguised. Why should he be? He was safe among his friends. The tiger is always at home among his kind; the rattlesnake is never bitten by his companions.

A seat was placed for the German. When he had taken it he took from a capacious pocket a roll of bills. The snaky eyes of the hellish quartet glittered at sight of the money. With the utmost coolness the German divided the heap into four piles. He was settling with the cat-men. It was to be his last payment before he went back to his brutal master beyond the seas.

As to Saidi Si perhaps he had paid him already. Or was the Hindu going with him?

The four piles of money were hidden on the persons of the quartet who salaamed and grinned, and then the German looked at Saidi Si.

That dark devil stooped from the divan and pressed a hidden spring under the rug. This rug, which I thought was seamless, parted, and a little trapdoor opened at Heiderburg's very feet.

The long hand of Saidi Si was thrust into the opening thus disclosed, and lo! to my bulging eyes brought up an object which resembled a miniature submarine! It was Trevor's invention. As the thing appeared the four Hindus rose and glided from the circular chamber, leaving the two men together.

I almost betrayed myself by the cry that escaped my lips at sight of the missing invention. It was still in America, still under the Stars and Stripes, but how long would it be there if the plotters had their way?

The twain fell to examining the model. I could not see the intricate machinery that had sprung from Trevor's brain, but I knew from the twains' actions that they realized its worth.

They placed it on a little table which Saidi Si drew toward him and continued to inspect it. The German's beady eyes glinted with triumph; he drew back and admired it, only to lean forward suddenly as if some delicate part claimed a closer inspection.

All at once his finger touched some part of the model to which he called his companion's attention by a look, and with both heads together they silently studied the submarine.

The next moment there came an interruption that had not been staged by the two actors in consummate villainy. It was a thunderbolt from a clear sky, a lightning flash from the serene blue.

A door flew open at one side of the room and a man leaped in with the roar, if not the mien, of a lion. He was madness, fury and agility compressed into one thing.

It was Sebastian Trevor!

How he had come back from Edgecliff, how in his state of mind he had found the conspirators, I did not give myself time to conjecture.

The villains sprang to their feet, but not before Trevor was upon them. Occultism may have turned his mind, but it had not sapped his Samsonian strength. He went at the horrified pair like a tiger from his ambush. The withered hand was as powerful as its mate. Its frenzied fingers closed upon Heiderburg's throat, as the other hand, with a clutch just as desperate, held the Hindu at arms' length.

Stunned for a moment by the startling interference, revolver in hand I dashed down the incline to the door which I knew was below.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

I DASHED against the lower door impetuously and it opened into the circular room.

I saw that the battle between Sebastian Trevor and his foes was not altogether a one-sided one. The former seemed possessed of supernatural strength backed by a will power which dominated his whole being. As I sprang across the floor Segrid Heiderburg dropped inert from his hands and Saidi Si hung in his grasp like a dishrag. With glittering eyes and a mad snarl at my interference the victor whirled upon me, but he saw in my mien that I was no foe.

Loosening his clutch upon the Brahmin he snatched the coveted invention from the table and held it before his gladdened sight. I caught him by the arm and dragged him through the open doorway as he hugged the little submarine to his breast. Not until we were out of the mystery trap did he speak. He looked into my face, and in a voice of triumph ejaculated:

"I have it! I have the thing that will make Germany pause! Who are you?"

I hardly knew how to answer him, but, seeing that he regarded me in the light of a friend, I pressed his hand, the withered one, which seemed answer enough.

That night when he was home again and in the presence of Honore, for whom I had sent a telegram, he seemed to get back to his old self, but there was still a missing link in the chain of memory.

He knew nothing of his abduction, nothing of the events immediately following it. By and by he spoke of the mental tortures he had suffered from the conspirators in their efforts to make him disclose the hiding-place of the precious model, but his will was superior to their might, and keeping him in durance, they turned their attention to the unearthing of the prize.

Aided by the four Hindus they at last found the secret hiding-place in the house in the woods, and the model reached the hands of the German. What would have been the final fate of Sebastian Trevor if he had not escaped from the locked room in Heiderburg's house can only be conjectured. As it was, much of his mind was a blank, and for a long time it was doubtful whether he would ever be his old self.

The next day after my last adventure in the Temple of Siva I re-entered the place accompanied by my friend Drexel. We were prepared to secure Saidi Si and the German, if we could find the latter, which was doubtful. This time I did not fear the men of the Coil, for they had evidently discovered how matters stood and were gone.

There were evidences of a sudden flight on the Brahmin's part. The old reptile had vanished, but in a little room we came upon a grewsome scene. Stretched upon a low cot was a huge body upon which the dim light fell ghastily. It was the corpse of Herr Heiderburg, and investigation showed that he had been strangled, not by the Cord, but by the hand of Trevor, *and the withered hand at that!*

No trace of Saidi Si was ever found. He had vanished as if by Eastern magic. But we did pick up one of the four Hindus a few days later who confessed that the bank check and the note received by Ho...re were cunning forgeries by his master. The private mark on the check was accounted for in a satisfactory manner, for when Sebastian Trevor was carried away by the conspirators, his check-book fell into their possession.

To-day the Temple of Siva has no tenant. The strange rite practised there are performed no more. The mischief it had done was enough, for it had almost defeated a great purpose of the government.

Trevor recovered sufficiently to take his invention to Washington in person, though protected by a guard. It met with approval, but the reward that was offered him he indignantly refused. He has money enough of his own and genius great enough to bring into being more than one device to help stay the bloody hand of the kaiser.

Thaddora came back to Honore and is still a trusted part of the household, and I may say in passing that I live under the same roof.

Every once in a while we four gather in the great library and live over the exciting hunt for the missing inventor and the miniature submarine. We wonder if Saidi Si has returned to his native jungles, accompanied by three of the men of the Cord. We don't discuss Herr Heiderburg, for we know that he is out of his crowned master's game forever, and when his name happens to come up there is a spasmodic closing of the Withered Hand, and a grim smile sweeps across Sebastian Trevor's face!

A thrilling detective story will appear in No. 25, out November 15. Do not miss this treat.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your semi-monthly copy of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this magazine every two weeks, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories that have been published in this magazine are well worth reading, if you have not already seen them. The list is as follows:

No.
1 THE EEL MAN, by Robert Carlton Brown
2 ZITANA OF MAISON ROUGE, by F. W. Doughty
3 THE MYSTERIOUS WEB, by Armstrong Perry
4 UNDER THE HYPNOTIC SPELL, by Dr. H. Enton
5 THE SILKEN SHEATH, by Crittenden Marriott
6 A FORTUNE TELLER'S SECRET, by Gladys Hall
7 THE MYSTIC EMBLEM, by Marie Coolidge Rask
8 THE CARDS OF FATE, by William Goode
9 MR. BACHELLER'S APARTMENTS, By William Hamilton Osborne
10 THE INNER WHEEL, by Octavius Roy Cohen
11 THE VOICE OF THE VALLEY, by Robt. C. Brown
12 THE SIGN OF THE SEVEN SHARKS, By Charles F. Oursler
13 UNDER A MASK, by Critenden Marriott
14 CASE 4,444, by Gladys Hall
15 AFTER A MILLION, by Police Captain Howard
16 SHADOWING THE BLUE TRIANGLE, By Charles F. Oursler
17 THE CASE OF CAPTAIN FORTESQUE, By Redfield Ingalls
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LIFE'S FITFUL FEVER

By ISABEL GORDON CURTIS

I FOUND a small heap of letters on my table one Saturday afternoon when I returned from the matinee at the Empire. The writing on one square heliotrope-tinted envelope puzzled me for a moment. It was familiar and yet—I opened it. It was from Elizabeth Van Dyne. Here it is:

"DEAR GIRL:—We are going to Bloomingdale Friday afternoon to give the patients an entertainment. Robert is there, you know, and their life is so terrible that it is charity to try and brighten it. Won't you help us? Will Ashland, Dan Lennox, Louis Dyotte, Margaret Pomeroy, Kate Ormonde and myself are down for songs, sketches and dances. Only I want something dramatic. Won't you give us the 'Ancient Mariner' as you did at the Macklin benefit last winter? I have never forgotten it, and I know the people at Bloomingdale would appreciate it. Send me a line to-night if it's possible for you to come, for I want to make up a programme of two hours. Help us out, Tete, if you can, for poor Robert's sake and mine.

"Your friend,

"ELIZABETH VAN DYNE."

I read it through with the shade of a frown between my eyebrows. Mr. Frohman was putting on a new piece and we had been having rehearsals for a month, besides the usual matinees and night performances. I was tired and anticipated the rest that Monday would bring. I remembered, too, an engagement—it was for Friday—a drive to Spuyten Duyvil, then dinner in the city before theater-time. I hated to give that up, and yet——

There was a gown to be mended. I would decide while I darned that ragged tear. It was growing dusk, so I lighted the lamp, drew my chair up to the blazing fire, got my sewing materials together, then I sat down. My thoughts went back to my first season on the stage. That was only eight years ago, but it seemed much shorter. Robert Van Dyne came into every day of my life then. He was such a tall, handsome fellow, so jolly, so kind, so tender-hearted! Every one was his friend. I liked him all the more because of his love and faith to his sweet little wife, and they were both so happy. One scene came back vividly to my memory. I dropped my sewing and gazed into the red coals as if I saw it there. It was while "John Tabb, Senior," was running at a Philadelphia theater. The play was short-lived, for there was nothing to excuse its existence except Robert Van Dyne's rôle, and he played it to a tearful audience every night for that short month. His part was that of an elderly man, who was slowly losing his reason and who guessed it, but was trying to hide it from his gay, happy, young wife. Elizabeth played the wife's rôle, and every night when she came off to leave him alone, where he had a seven-minute scene by himself, and the strongest situation in the drama, she stood in the wings watching him. The tears would come to her eyes and she clasped her hands as if in very agony. There she stayed, night after night, until the curtain fell and he came to her. Then she would take his hand, looking up in his face with wet eyes. He would kiss her and put his arm about her; then they went to their dressing rooms. Three years later, when, in the midst of a brilliant engagement, Robert suddenly lost his reason, people spoke wonderingly of his work as "John Tabb, Senior," and the piece was actually revived for a short season, only nobody ever played the title rôle as Robert had done.

How good they had both been to me in those early days. I was perfectly ignorant of what a theatrical life was and there were troubles enough, temptations enough, only the Van Dynes were always near to help or care for me. We had been together for two years when, like thousands of men and women in stage life, we drifted apart. I heard little more of them except that they were both playing leading rôles in the East. One day came the news that Robert had gone insane, hopelessly insane, and been taken to Bloomingdale. I was in San Francisco at that time with a stock company, and I wrote to Elizabeth telling her of how deep my sympathy was. I heard from her once, her letter was a written sob; then years passed and she seemed lost. I came East, and, during a New York engagement, I met her at that benefit she had mentioned. Her girlish freshness was gone, and her plump little figure had grown thin. I missed her old vivacity, yet she was bright, cheery and gentle as of yore.

She had just come back to the stage, so she told me, because all the money was gone, principally for Robert. The greatest doctors for brain disease had done all they possibly could, but it was of no avail. So she had returned to her old work, "to comedy rôles," she explained with a pathetic smile, "for nobody will try me in anything else. They all remember me as I was—in those days—only how can I play them to-day as I did then?"

But she did play them and played them well, and I knew the excellent salary she was earning went largely to make Robert one of the most comfortably lodged patients at Bloomingdale.

I tossed down my half-darned gown and turned to my desk to write two notes. One was to Elizabeth, telling her I would do anything she wished me to; the other was to plead leave to break my engagement for Friday.

That day I ate a hasty lunch and drove to the asylum where I met the rest of our party. Elizabeth looked pale and sad, but the boys were cheering her in their kindly, hearty way; we were all one in sympathy. I was having a fit of "the nerves," although I tried hard not to show it. The name "lunatic asylum" gave me a thrill of horror, and I had a strange misgiving that every one we met after entering the grounds was insane. I eyed the staid attendants fearfully, and it was with a frightened gasp that I shook hands with the gentlemanly superintendent who greeted us so cordially.

The cleverly extemporized theater was a hall where the services were held Sunday, and while I worked over my make-up in a small room near the stage, I could hear the audience gathering in as orderly a fashion as the house to which I was wont to play every night. At last I was ready, with my wrinkled face, long white beard and hair, and a loose monkish robe that almost hid my sandaled feet.

I heard an outburst of laughter. There were shouts of delight and wild applause, with sometimes a shrill, wild

laugh that made my blood run chill for a moment. I peeped out from the wings. Will Ashland was on, giving them a droll Bowery sketch, with songs and dances, which had brought down the house in a Broadway theater time and again. Elizabeth was at the other side of the stage, staring out with a strained look, which, with their dark make-up, made her eyes seem strangely large. She had a basket on her arm, and a gayly flowered hat on her head. The rest of her costume was the short, bright, peasant garb that suited her dainty figure so admirably. Will gave an encore or two. It seemed almost impossible to get away from that excited, applauding audience. I shivered slightly, while I wondered what might happen if one should anger instead of please them.

Then I saw Elizabeth run out, gayly tossing the basket about her head.

"Heavens! She's going to break down," said Louis Dyotte, catching my arm, "she almost sobbed just now. Let us go around to the other side of the stage. We can see Robert from there. He is almost in front. Good Lord, he doesn't even know her," he added.

We were gazing straight at him. I recognized him instantly in spite of hair that had grown white, and the strange, vacant look which had changed his merry, black eyes. He was gazing stolidly at the stage, as if in stupid wonder at the yellow-haired creature dancing there. Elizabeth's sobs had ceased; she was the gay, frolicsome soubrette of seven years ago, pouring her whole soul into a laughing song, as if in one desperate effort to win a glance of recognition from her husband's eyes. She was applauded wildly, but Robert was silent, stupid, unappreciative, as if he had been deaf and blind. The applause grew louder, and every time when Elizabeth ran out to us it was only to dance back again, singing with the very gayety of despair.

"Don't let her go this time," cried Louis. "Theresa, you do your turn; she will scream if she goes out again."

He took her in his arms when she came to the wings, and as I went on I could hear a wailing, half-muffled cry: "Oh, Louis, Louis, he didn't even know me."

"Make it as thrillingly realistic as you wish," said the superintendent, before I went out. "The people here appreciate anything intensely dramatic. A famous tragedian who came here for one entertainment recited in monologue the death scene from *Virginius*, and they fairly gave him an ovation, so do not fear stirring them."

The house grew still when I appeared. I could feel many of them gaze curiously at my cowled figure and frosted hair. The gruesome story of the Ancient Mariner is a dramatic one, and I had grown interested instead of fearful, so I was ready to throw all my heart into my twenty minutes' work. I lowered my contralto voice to its deepest tone; the strange rhythm can be made impressive enough, and in a few seconds I felt that I had every maniac in that large audience listening expectantly. I was watching Robert during the first few lines, but he had no memory, no interest, no life.

Before I reached the second verse, a strange figure in the second row caught my eye, and I could not look away from him. I was half fascinated, half repelled. It was a man who was tall, bent and gaunt. I could not see his face, he was hiding it behind his programme. I was looking down on top of his head. Once it must have been terribly lacerated, for one could see the marks of awful scars, which were white, jagged seams, where the dark hair did not grow. He sat motionless, and I noticed that on the hand which held his programme three fingers were missing. I watched him with a strange concentration, indeed, I could not take my eyes away from him; I felt as if he was the only figure there. An impressive stillness had fallen on the house; I knew that I was reciting better than I had ever done in my life. Somehow the place and the circumstances seemed to hypnotize me; I was fascinating the audience by almost no effort of my own. I heard my own voice speaking slowly and in deep, solemn tones:

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around,
It cracked and growled and roared and howled
Like noises in a swound.
At length did cross an Albatross;
Through the fog it came
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name."

I spoke the lines, watching that bent figure below me. Suddenly I noticed him stir, and a shiver seemed to run through his body. I could not look away from him. But I went on.

Suddenly the mutilated hand moved and his face was lifted to mine. As long as I shall live I fear I can never forget that face. I felt my body grow cold and a strange tremor crept over me, but I heard my voice mumble on.

I never finished the last line. My eyes were fastened on that ghastly face. It was white almost as death, seamed by great, red scars which had torn into the very bone. Two empty torn sockets were left where the eyes had been, the nose had gone, as well as one ear; it was scarcely the semblance of a human face. As I stood there, unnerved and numb, a terrible shriek with the wildness of terror in it and the horror of despair, had broken the silence. The madman had risen and was groping about wildly in the darkness, as if eager to reach my voice. He was talking excitedly in a strange tongue and his mutilated hand was trying to reach me across space.

"Ring down the curtain," I heard Louis Dyotte shout. Then somebody half led me, half carried me into a wide, airy corridor behind the stage. But through it all, like through a fog, I heard orders given by a quick, peremptory voice.

"Carry on the entertainment," it said, "anything, anybody will do. You must quiet them and distract their attention while Bonner is being taken out."

In a few minutes I was myself again and I returned to the dressing room to remove my make-up. I could hear a song, a recitation, a dance; then almost before I had donned my street garb I was hurried out upon the stage. I filled in with a monologue, something quiet and simple, then Margaret Pomeroy sang, and—it was all over.

We gathered in the superintendent's room half an hour later for a chat and lunch before returning to the city.

"Who is he?" I asked of a young doctor, who was trying to assure me that I had unusual nerve to try and finish my recitation.

"It's a horrible story," he said, hesitatingly.

"It must be, only tell it to me."

"First, I want to assure you that we had no intention of allowing Bonner to be present to-day. Indeed, nobody seems to know how he came there."

"Well, it could not be helped and I might have been braver, but tell me about him."

"He was sent to us five or six years ago from a hospital in Panama. It was a place for the sick, they could not harbor the insane, and as the man has plenty of money he has the best of care.

"Some ten years ago he was a New Yorker, a man who, although he inherited wealth, seems to be strangely friendless. He is now only forty, but, excepting a distant cousin or two who sometimes inquire for him, he has no relations. He had one fad, ornithology, and that seemed to take him

wandering all over the world. About seven years ago he started for a voyage down South on a vessel bound around Cape Horn. One day while they were nearing the Cape he seemed to go perfectly crazy over a flock of albatrosses that were following the vessel. He watched them intently for hours, made sketches of them (for they say he was a clever artist), and took a number of photographs. Suddenly, while the vessel was plunging on at great speed, he was seen to go overboard. His camera had almost slipped from his hand, and, in trying to save it, he went headlong. Then the vessel was brought to a standstill and a boat lowered. They were quite a distance from where he had fallen, still they searched diligently but he could not be found, so he was given up for lost. A few hours later a schooner, which had been following in their wake, noticed a large albatross struggling in the water. Some of the crew manned a boat and rowed out to it. They knew the bird's habits and saw it was acting strangely. They found it beating its wings against a human body, for this poor Bonner had caught its leg when he fell among the flock of birds and clung to it with the desperation of the hope of life. His hand and face were wounded horribly by its wings and beak; his eyes had been pecked out and his body was one terible bruise. He had been in the water for five hours, so they estimated, clinging to that fateful bird. They carried him to the nearest hospital and left him there for dead, as they fancied. The man must have had wonderful vitality to live; indeed, he is as healthy to-day as he was seven years ago, only he is hopelessly insane."

I have never recited the Ancient Mariner since that day.

Read the queer Oriental story we are going to issue in the next number of this magazine.

KITCHEN OF THE SHAH

IT is claimed that in the way of equipment the Shah of Persia's kitchen is the finest in the world. The cooking utensils and the movable apparatus are said to be worth $2,500,000. It is stated that all the table service in use in the kitchen for cooking and testing purposes is adorned with gold, stew and sauce pans included.

The covers of dishes are also of gold, adorned with precious stones. The chief cook, employed to make especially appetizing dishes for the Shah, uses warming dishes, ladles and even coal shovels of gold-plated silver.

It is said that the royal household attaches much the same importance to gold dishes that Western nations do to sterilized ones, and a cook detected in using an ordinary dish in preparing a meal for the monarch was, some five years ago, dismissed and fined.

Probably the kitchen of the Queen Dowager Alexandra at Sandringham in England is the second most splendidly furnished kitchen in the world so far as appointments are concerned. It is much better appointed than the corresponding kitchens at Windsor or Buckingham Palace, the Queen Dowager having superintended the details herself.

The kitchen of the French President, though thoroughly up-to-date and a model of convenience and cleanliness, is said to be as unpretentious as possible, the dishes being of silver indeed, but quite unornamental. Ladles, toasting forks and other kitchen utensils are of the same model as those used in the most well-to-do families throughout the country. Nevertheless, it is in the kitchen of the French President that are prepared many of those delicate morsels, the recipes for which are eagerly sought throughout the world.

WHY YOU LAUGH

JUST why in certain more or less indefinable situations we fall into a sort of violent, pleasant convulsion which we call laughter is a mystery to most of us. Dr. George W. Crile, in studying the evolutionary origin of human reactions, finds that laughter is a purposeless but beneficent discharge of accumulated energy.

Laughter is most common among the healthy, well-fed and leisurely, whose waking moments are filled with an abundance of bodily activity. Among those of low vitality, the crude inhabitants of the earth's waste places, among the sick and wasted, it is rare. Healthy, happy children are especially prone to laughter. The young laugh more than the very old. The radiant young woman on the verge of maturity laughs perhaps most of all. Laughter accompanies high vital energy.

What causes laughter? Good news, high spirits, good stories, tickling and numerous other things. The typical comic situation gives us an inkling. A story develops arousing emotion of some sort, storing up energy for action. Then a sudden and unexpected twist, and the subject is left with an amount of emotion stored up with the situation which called it forth quickly dissipated.

Man is a motor animal. What moves him moves him to action—that is to say, energy for action is accumulated. And he can rid himself of this energy by action. That is why muscular exercise will dissipate an emotion, such as anger. Activating substances thrown into the blood may be consumed as completely by any other muscular action as by the particular muscular action for which these chemical substances were intended. A stimulus activates you to fight; chemical energy for the act forms in the body; reason holds you back; anger is your consciousness of the energy stored; any muscular activity will use up this energy; you walk vigorously and the effort clears away your anger.

In the case of laughter energy is accumulated, and there is sudden need for discharging it in some way. Some set of muscles must be set working. The most convenient is the powerful group of respiratory muscles of the chest. They contract vigorously, exercising off the accumulated emotional energy. This office by other muscles of the body is ruled out by adaptation. Sudden and violent action of the arms or legs would be highly inconvenient.

In the case of tickling we find that man is activated to laughter by way of the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, the throat and particularly the sides of the chest. These are precisely parts where man and his ancestors have for ages been subject to injury. The hands and feet were readily hurt by climbing, locomotion, etc.; the throat and chest were ready points of attack by enemies. Tickling of these parts brings back vague responses of ages ago; the organism is stimulated to immediate and powerful action and, as man is to-day, there is no purposeful action in which to utilize this instinctively collected strength, so he discharges it by a useless but comparatively convenient form of muscular activity—laughter.

A TOO LATE REMORSE

By MRS. C. C. SCOTT

"WELL, well! If that don't beat all! Thar's three buggies and a cyart! Nervy's got lots o' comp'ny, 'pears like," Mrs. Sallie Beard remarked, as she pulled up in front of Mr. Dunlap's residence.

The white, sandy road glittered with heat, stretching away north and south miles and miles into the dim oak forests.

"Mrs. Larry said yistiddy Mrs. Dunlap was mighty sick. Maybe she's daid, gran'ma," ventured the other occupant of the cart.

"We'd better go in," Mrs. Beard decided, urged by neighborly interest and curiosity.

She drove a little nearer, and, pushing her brown sunbonnet back from her pleasant old face, she scanned the house and grounds. Resting upon the high rail fence were the shafts of several rickety vehicles, and below, under the shade of a tree, was a wagon.

On the long front gallery stood a square pine table, which held the usual water bucket. A tin basin sat beside it, and above hung a long towel. From the wall on the left of the open hall hung saddles, bridles, halters and bits of rope. Dogs, from a tiny terrior to a great unhappy-looking cur that tugged at a block and chain, lay about the house and yard. The hounds stood half erect against the fence, barking and growling out their disapproval of company.

"Whoa, Moll!" Mrs. Beard addressed the tall, angular mule she drove. "Take the rope, hun; le's tie her good. Moll's plum tur'ble t' slip the bridle."

Mrs. Beard handed her pink-cheeked granddaughter a much-worn plow line. Her face was very anxious, but the child's mouth smiled and dimpled, and the prim white bonnet atop her sunny head made the sweet face within remind one of a blush rosebud inside the calyx of a white lily.

"Now, hun, come on. Gran'ma won't let them dogs pester you."

She took the child's hand in hers and walked as swiftly as her rheumatic feet would allow up the sandy path into the house. On the threshold a woman met her—a woman whose very appearance was eloquent of better days.

"How's all?" Mrs. Beard breathed, awed by a nameless dread.

"Mrs. Dunlap died yesterday."

"In fact! Po' Minervy! How's Sam a-takin' of it?"

"He has not been at home for several days."

"A hawg huntin'?"

"I suppose so," was the quiet reply.

"Sam'll die an' go t' hawgs yit," said a voice from a window.

"La, Tildy! how you do run on," Mrs. Beard reproachfully whispered.

In a corner of the large square room, near a window, sat a group of neighbors talking in subdued tones.

"It's spankin' new—jes' got it," one remarked, glancing at a new, shining sewing machine against the wall.

"Hain't never sewed a stitch on it yit—Nervy ain't," Mrs. Evans sighed.

"An' that stove—hit's new, too—hain't never been sot up yit, much less been cooked on," Mrs. Mackey said, with a deeper sigh.

There were sighs of burdened hearts and sighs of relief and indifference, each as antipodal from the other in force, expression and fact, as speech is different from song.

"Hit's cur'us how they didn't come in time t' he'p po' Nervy out," Mrs. Bangs said, as she knitted a blue and white stocking.

"Thar comes Sam now. Reckin he knows?"

"Git Miss Vowel t' tell him."

A stout, middle-aged man in his shirt sleeves unsaddled a mule at the lot gate, and, after leaving him tied to a peg under the stable shed, he came hurriedly into the yard.

After a whispered consultation the woman of better days advanced to meet him.

"Hello! Hello!" he shouted, good-naturedly. "What's up? Camp meetin' or log rollin'?"

"Neither, Mr. Dunlap, your wife——"

"What's the matter with Nervy? Had a conniption fit?"

"She is dead."

"Dead! Who?"

"Your poor wife is dead."

"Dead? Who? Nervy dead?" he asked, bewildered.

"She died yesterday."

"An' me in the woods after them confounded hawgs! I'll be hanged if I believe it! Well, I never knowed you to joke before, Mrs. Vowel, ner t' lie, either. I'm blessed if I don't believe you're crazy! Why, Nervy's tougher'n hick'ry or white oak—she's got a habit o' lookin' funny an' yailer an' sorter weakly. No, ma'am, I don't b'lieve a doggone word about that dead bizniss. You can't git that off on me, Mrs. Vowel. I'm too old," he laughed.

"Come and see."

Mrs. Vowel led the way into a back room where, in awful calmness, lay the dead wife.

The world said Sam Dunlap was a "hard case," a man without feeling or principle. Hard working himself, he extorted hard, constant work from every one around him, and the delicate, sensitive wife might have fared differently with a different husband.

Sam Dunlap was not intentionally cruel or careless, but he was so absorbed in money-getting that that one idea swallowed up every other.

He stood gazing in a stunned bewilderment at the poor, pinched face, and the folded hands so unused to idleness. The straight, frail figure on the couch impressed him as nothing had ever done.

Mrs. Vowel turned towards the door.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned. "Mrs. Vowel, was I good t' Nervy? You've been here in the house three year, gwine on four, an' you know. Was I good t' Nervy?"

"I am no man's judge. God forbid that I should judge any one."

"What's a feller t' do? If I was good t' Nervy, say so, an' if I wasn't good t' Nervy, jes' spit it out! By George! Say one or t'other!"

Mrs. Vowel was silent.

"Didn't I buy that new sewin' machine—give George Stinson a clean forty dollars for it? Didn't I set an' nuss

that machine all the way from Camden? Jes' set an' nussed it an' held on t' it t' keep the wagin from joltin' it all to flinders? You ner no other man can say I didn't! Didn't I give a big, thirty-five dollars for that new cookin' stove? Bross can tell you so, an' here's Nervy plum dead! I tell you, Mrs. Vowel," he began again, "I tell you it's a darned, infernal shame. Here's Nervy dead, an' never got to sew a single doggone stitch on that forty dollar machine, nor cook a blame thing on that new stove. I ain't afeared t' tell you it's doggone mean—it's a darned shame!"

Something like a smile flitted over Mrs. Vowel's patrician features. Her dark eyes held an abiding sadness in their depths, even when the little ghost of a smile came and went. The lines, which a close acquaintance with suffering, with sympathy for others and the responsibility of a bread-and-butter battle had traced upon her high-bred face, were clearer to-day, for she already realized that one more of her few stanch friends had gone.

Sam Dunlap's face was smeared with streaks of black from his grimy hands, and his bald head made the background for grotesque pictures of daubs and patches of dirt.

Mrs. Vowel covered the face of her dead friend lovingly and reverently. The world is full of heroic souls, who are never heard of outside of their limited circles. We often scorn to honor the "prophet in our midst," and are all indifferent to those who, suffering, tuck their tender memories away in aching hearts,

> "And give no sign
> Save faded lips and whitened tresses."

Outside the sun shone, the sweet wind sighed a requiem through the oaks, and behind and beyond lay broad fields of blooming cotton. Sam Dunlap was the best farmer in Canaan (not the historical Canaan of Galilee, but Canaan in Ouchita County, Arkansas, whose actualities were more picturesque than its history, and a retrospection fills the mind of a native with memories of the loveliest of Arcarias); his fences were well built, his fie'ds well cultivated and his cattle and mules well kept. To be sure his neighbors did sometimes accuse him of appropriating more wild hogs in the swamps than his "claim" allowed, and more than once report was rife of his having "laid down" the fences of a neighbor's cornfield that his stock might enter and destroy.

Sam Dunlap's mule had been "tracked" many a time when he had never suspected. Though he was held in such contempt, his patient wife was much loved. She had "married below her station and lived to repent," was the verdict of the neighborhood.

"Sam's a-cryin'," Mrs. Beard whispered to Mrs. Mackey.

"Sam orter cry, he orter cry blood."

"You know, Sister Mackey, the Good Book p'int'ly says 'Judge not.'"

"I know what I'm a-talkin' about, Sister Beard, lemme tell you," hitching her chair nearer. "Sam never let Nervy have nothin' she took plaisure in. He even flung away her flowers, boxes an' all, an' Sam 'lowed 'tain't no use o' flowers; nobody couldn't eat sich trash.' Then when Nervy was so broke up about it, Sam he says, 'Plant cawn; they's 'most as purty as taters,' says he. Yes, Sister Beard, Sam orter cry blood. I said it onct, an' I say it ergin."

"Lawsy me!" Sister Evans exclaimed, in mild surprise.

"That ain't a patchin', Sister Evans. I told Sam a month ago that Nervy was the biliousest woman in Canaan, an' when I sent her some o' pap's pills that old Dr. Williams made, Sam up an' tuck every one o' them pills hise'lf! He' lowed he needs medercine. Nervy was jest hysterricky."

"My Lawd!"

"More'n that," continued Sister Mackey, "Sam's everlastin'ly tellin' Nervy 'bout no woman bein' fittin' t' live if she ain't able t' fling an' sling the pots an' skillets. You can't tell me nothin' about Sam Dunlap; I know him." Sister Mackey gave her nose a sniff. "An' it's my opinion a-flingin' an' a-slingin' pots an' skillets is what kilt poor Nervy at last."

"Jedge not—jedge not!" Sister Beard pleaded, softly.

"Lawd! Thar's Sam!" Sister Bangs whispered.

"Mrs. Mackey!" he called, advancing toward the group.

"That's my name, Sam."

"Mrs. Mackey, was I good t' Nervy?"

"Well, Sam," Mrs. Mackey said boldly, "from my stan'p'int, you wasn't no better'n you mought a-been."

"Sister Mackey means you might a-been more thoughtfuller like, Sam." Sister Beard spoke from the fullness of her kind heart.

"When I speak I say facts," Sister Mackey retorted.

"Mrs. Mackey, was I good t' Nervy?"

Mrs. Mackey looked upon his mottled face and tear-dimmed eyes without pity.

"You oughter know. You was good enough t' gobble down all the pills she needed, you was that good."

"Didn't I buy that cussed machine fo' Nervy?" hoping for a gleam of comfort.

"You got it too late, Sam."

"Didn't I git that bran new stove fo' Nervy?"

"Too late, too late, t' he'p po' Nervy, Sam. She shows her keepin', Nervy does. She was a purty gal when you brung her here, Nervy was."

"Oh, Lord!" the man cried in anguish of soul.

Mrs. Mackey went on pitilessly.

"That dinner had to be on that table eggzakly at twelve; whether Nervy was sick or well them hands had t' have that dinner on time. She'd as well be dead, po' thing! She never got to go nowhar—not even t' meetin'. Why? 'Cause Sam Dunlap rid after cattle an' hawgs all day Sundays an' worked a weekdays. Thar's jes one pussen a-livin' in Sam Dunlap's house, an' that's Sam Dunlap hisse'f. You've took pow'ful good keer o' yourse'f, Sam. Nobody's disputin' that p'int."

The man walked away, his eyes upon the ground. Mrs. Mackey's reference to the changed appearance of his wife smote him sorely.

He remorsefully remembered that bright June day when he took his pretty, trusting bride from her mother's arms—safer refuge than a husband's—promising to fill her young life with the love and peace born of perfect trust. Alas! he recalled the harshness which had met her timid pleadings a year afterwards—pleadings and tears for a touch of her mother's hand, a glimpse of the old home lovelight.

"Sam's a-gittin' what he needs," Mrs. Evans said.

"Now you're talking sense," Mrs. Mackey endorsed.

"Don't, Sister Mackey, Sam's a-sufferin'. Po' Sam," wept Mrs. Beard.

Sister Mackey was a Christian of uncompromising, bleak, December variety. She knew two roads leading eternityward—one a narrow, thorny path, uphill all the way and through indescribable tortures and difficulties. At the end of this route, which Sister Mackey chose to walk, was eternal rest and peace. The other way was easy and broad and beautiful, and led direct to the fire and brimstone region.

Sister Beard rejoiced in the perpetual June of her faith. Her narrow mountain trail was brightened by floods of sunshine and glorified by wayside flowers, fragrant woods with here and there a mossy cushion on which to rest and

listen to tender leaf-whisperings and tiny waterfalls—where a mountain rill dashed over shining rocks. Through the splash and ripple and tumbling melody of the clear waters she could hear the chirp and twitter of the shy wood birds, and through the overhanging foliage of her path stole merry little shimmers of sunshine.

These thoughts flitted often through her mind—blossoms of her ever-pitying soul, for Sister Beard was a June Christian.

"He'll miss her," sighed Mrs. Evans.

"He orter miss her, an' miss her bad," declared the inexorable Sister Mackey.

"Our old Bill mule missed Jack after pap sold him, 'cause Bill an' Jack pulled together ten or twelve year a-haulin'. 'Twix' me an' you an' the gate pos' that's the way Sam's gwine to miss Nervy."

"Eggzakly, Sister Bangs."

"Jedge not, Sister Mackey," from Sister Beard's corner.

"Sam'll hafter hire a nigger t' fling in wood an' sling pots an' skillets now."

"Yes, an' niggers ain't the equinomacalist folks in the world, nuther. Nervy's dyin' gwine t' cost Sam mor'n he's a-studyin' about, too."

"Sam's a mighty good pervider—always a-plenty o' hawg an' hom'ny whar Sam air. We've all got our weak p'ints. The Lord knows I've got lots of failin's," Sister Beard said, when she had wiped her eyes, her heart full of sorrow for the stricken creature who sobbed beside the dead wife.

"We've all got them. That's so," Mrs. Amos admitted. "An' fur's I'm intrusted 'tain't nair bit o' my biznis, an' for my part I druther not have such a big lot o' vittles an' have mo' kind treatment."

"I ain't like you, Tildy Amos. I druther my Jahn'd give me a outdacious beatin' every Saddy night, an' lemme have all the vittles an' good clo'se I want, es t' be so pow'ful lovin' an' git no grub, ner clo'se nuther. I'll take a beatin' ev'ry night to git what I want," Mrs. Evans laughed.

"Lawd! What a pison dawg that Sam Dunlap's been!" Sister Mackey remarked, coming back from the door.

"Jedge not, Sister Mackey, or you'll be jedged accordin'. Sam was tollerable good t' Nervy. Sam's sorter keerlis—no keerliser with Nervy than with anybody else. He's jes' nachelly keerlis," Sister Beard spoke earnestly.

"Po' Nervy was the religiousest woman you ever seen, but she never had no chance for nothin', po' thing! It was cook an' wash dishes, an' cook all the time, an' Sam he never seen she's a breakin' down."

"What's his two eyes for if they ain't to see? I bet ef a cow er a mule was sick, Sam'd a-know'd it." Sister Mackey gave no quarter.

"I know Nervy never wanted the needcesserties of life, but Sam was mighty keerlis; his own blood kin can't fight that p'int fo' him."

"She'd ruther had kindness an' keer, as so much vittles an' clo'se, I know."

"Hush up, Tildy. Ef Dick Amos was always billin' an' a-cooin' an' a-kissin' an' bringin' no grub into the house, you'd mighty soon git tired o' that way o' doin', 'cause it's pow'ful thin diet. Billin' an' cooin' an' kissin' don't stick to the ribs. It takes vittles!" declared Mrs. Bangs.

"All the same, I'll take the cooin' an' kissin'. I was raised a pet, bein' paw's only girl."

"Sister Amos looks like a pet," Mrs. Mackey said, dryly.

A smothered laugh went around the circle.

"A little yaller canary bird er a pet rabbit."

Sister Amos' ample figure swayed and rocked and shook as she vainly struggled against the laugh her quaint old neighbor's words and names provoked.

"Yes, Tildy's a purty pet; it's plum curls we ain't seed that 'fo' now."

"Hush!" half whispered Mrs. Bangs.

"Hush—sh-sh-sh!"

"I think," Mrs. Vowel said, coming across the room, "we will have Mr. Lonnius to preach the funeral to-day. His regular appointment is at the schoolhouse, isn't it?"

"You're right, Mrs. Vowel " said Sister Beard.

"Hit's plum proper, Mrs. Vowel," Sister Mackey assured her.

"That's what I say."

"Did you ask Sam?" Mrs. Bangs inquired.

"No, Mrs. Bangs, I did not."

"Sam, he don't need no astin'," Mrs. Evans decided.

"Mrs. Vowel, you've been here three year a-teachin' in that Canaan schoolhouse—a-he'pin' folks out. The very last time I seed po' Nervy she was a-tellin' me how good an' he'pful you was to her. The Lord'll bless you for it, Sister Vowel." And Sister Banks buried her face in her apron and wept aloud.

A tear stole down the teacher's pale face, and again the half smile came and went.

At half-past two in the afternoon Sister Beard announced that "Bother Lonnius" was coming.

A crowd had gathered around the gate, and upon the fence sat the men and boys, while the house was thronged with women, babies and dogs.

The circuit rider stood at the end of the large room.

His much-worn Bible and hymn book lay on a small table in front of him.

Mrs. Vowel sat with others near a window, and the master of the house walked restlessly about the room.

A psalm was read, the preacher "lined" a hymn which all sang, then a prayer was offered.

If uncultured, the eulogy which followed had at least the beauty of sincerity. His trembling, sing-songy voice carried with it a moral and religious power—a specific agent for a specific purpose. Sincerity was the circuit rider's most potent expression of eloquence, and transcended every other element in his discourse of convincing persuasion.

Sisters Beard, Mackey and Evans responded with fervent amens.

"Though walkin' thorny an' onthankful paths here, our sister now treads the golden streets," spake the preacher, with much feeling.

"Nervy never expected no thankin'—never wanted no thankin'!" burst from Sam Dunlap's quivering lips. "You all talk like I'd killed Nervy, or starved her! I didn't know a doggoned thing about it—was a-huntin' hawgs in the swamps."

"Hush, Sam! Nobody said you killed Nervy—leastwise, not shot her nor killed her with a ax. Hush up! Go on, Brother Lonnius."

Sister Bangs settled herself back in her chair.

"What for?"

" 'Cause it's Christian-like. Dry up, Sam!" commanded Sister Mackey, with fire in her eye.

Sam Dunlap was silent, his rough, unrefined nature at last grasping something conciliating, if not comforting, his conscience awaking to the depth and breadth of his life-long selfishness.

The future stretched out into a vast chaos of nothingness.

"Lis'n t' Brother Lonnius, Sam," Sister Beard said, coaxingly.

In Sam Dunlap's dense, coarse brain the idea of immortality had never taken root, notwithstanding the many efforts Sister Mackey had made to impress upon him its vital importance.

A feeling of injustice took possession of him. He looked down into the dead face of his wife, touched the folded, work-worn hands, and piteously appealed to her who had so long meekly endured and made no moan.

"I went and bought you that sewin' machine—jes' fo' you, Nervy—an' a bran' new stove, too—fo' you, Nervy—jes' fo' you. Nobody says I was good to you, Nervy, was I mean t' you, Nervy?" he sobbingly implored.

"It ain't no use o' talkin' t' daid folks, Sam. You know she can't hear nair word. Your goodness comes too late—too late fo' Nervy," Mrs. Mackey's rasping voice broke in upon his sighs and sobs.

"Jedge not, Sister Mackey," softly warned Sister Beard.

"Why didn't somebody tell me I was killin' Nervy? I never seen she's po'ly," Sam Dunlap demanded, touching the smoothly brushed hair with his great, grimy hand.

"Come away, Sam, come away. She's all right now—Nervy'll never be po'ly no more. Come, Sam, you can't do her no good now." Sister Beard laid her hand upon his arm and wept silently.

"Don't take her away," he pleaded, with the persistency of a child. "Let Nervy alone! I want t' tell her lots o' things. I didn't mean t' treat her bad, an'——"

"Too late—too late fo' Nervy, Sam."

"Jedge not, Sister Mackey," Sister Beard sobbed. "Don't be so hard on po' Sam."

"If Nervy jes' know'd," Sam Dunlap persisted.

"I believe she does know you're sorry fo' yer keerlishness, Sam. God's good. He'll tell Nervy."

"Don't take Nervy now—wait till to-morrer," Sam Dunlap pleaded, as they bore the casket to the grave of little cedars back of the garden, where two short, sunken mounds mutely told a story of buried hopes and ashes of love.

Sam Dunlap's life spread panorama-like before his quickened senses as he realized in a half-dazed way that it was "Nervy" they lowered into the grave, and when all was over he allowed himself to be led away. Like a child he followed Mrs. Beard's bidding.

"God 'll be sho' t' tell her you're sorry," she whispered, as they turned away.

The hopeless days and weeks dragged away on leaden feet. Sam Dunlap was rarely at home. Often he spent weeks alone with his helpless misery in the cypress swamps, until a year had drawn its tortuous length between the doomsday of his happiness and the afternoon he came home—after a prolonged stay in the swamps—sick, sick unto death.

"I don't keer now," he said to Sister Beard. "I don't keer now po' Nervy's gone, an' didn't know I meant t' be good t' her."

"God's done told Nervy. I jes' know He has," Sister Beard assured him from the brightness of her June faith.

"Yes, yes!" she continued, cheerily. "I can mighty nigh see Nervy a-laughin' 's God's a-tellin' all 'bout how you loved her an' was jes' only keerlis like."

"I'm plum' wore out," sighed the sick creature. "I don't keer fo' nothin'—since Nervy died an' didn't know how——"

"There, there, Sam, it's all right now," Sister Beard said, soothingly. "God's done told Nervy."

"I can't he'p it now—I don't seem t' keer fo' nothin' now."

To Sam Dunlap's helpless, crucified soul anything was better than the black, hopeless torture of the past year.

With the peace of Heaven in her soul and the light of the New Jerusalem in her eyes Sister Beard had done what she could for him that long dreary year "after Nervy died;" and when he lay delirious in the throes of swamp fever, she hovered around his pillow like an angel of mercy.

Like a Nemesis Sister Mackey also attended.

She shook her head ominously when the sufferer babbled of happier days.

"Hit's too late to cry fo' spilt milk, Sam," she shrilly spoke. "Too late—too late!"

"There, there, Sam, it's all right. Nervy knows. God's done told her. There, there, go t' sleep now." Sister Beard's tears fell on the hot brow she smoothed so tenderly.

"Hit's a pow'ful bad sign t' pick at the cover," Sister Mackey whispered, as the restless hands wandered over the bed.

"What's Sam a-sayin'?"

Sister Beard listened tearfully as he muttered of "Nervy—cookstove—sewin' marshene—forty dollars—po', po' Nervy—a darned shame——" and as into the darkness of night his soul drifted, he whispered:

"Too late, too—late—fo' Nervy!"

No. 25 is going to contain a gripping mystery story that will please you.

HEATHEN RELIGIONS

WEIRD outbursts of religious mania are reported from many parts of the German Empire. Many extreme Pan-Germans have given way to a kind of heathenish mysticism. They openly propagate a revival of the pagan worship of the ancient Teutons, including offerings to Wotan.

The commander of the 19th Army Corps at Leipzig has found it necessary to prohibit meetings of a sect known as the "Little Flock," which originated at Meerane.

Its head is a weaver named Hain, whom his adherents address as "Holy Father." He poses as the Messiah and pronounces "sentences" from his "judgment seat," from which he "separates the sheep from the goats."

The new "Messiah" has achieved some measure of popularity by his attacks on the established clergy on the ground that they draw stipends which, he says, the apostle Paul never did; neither does he, himself. The "Little Flock" craze, it seems, has spread to such an extent in Saxony, especially among impressionable young people, that the authorities have had to interfere.

A more modern offshoot of this queer movement is headed by one Ludwig Neuner, who definitely renounces Christianity on the superfluous plea that it is "foreign to the German ideal." Family life is out of date, says Neuner, and all children should be charges of the state.

For prayer, Neuner proposes the following substitute, which the Roman Catholic Germania appropriately calls a "prayer ersatz," or substitute:

Bodily and mental "uplift" movement every morning; baths, deep breathing, song and dance, reading of valuable poetry, contemplation of truly artistic objects of art; training of will power by auto suggestion, etc. The Roman Catholic Bavarian *Courier* suggests an additional movement—tapping of the forehead morning, noon and night.

A NIGHT AT THE COUNTESS CLUB

By WINFIELD F. MOTT

RICHARD KEEN, the retired London detective, formerly of the Scotland Yard force, was a man in whose make-up there was very little of the romantic element. Yet the singular episodes in which he become involved through a chance meeting with his friend, Sir Percy Harwood, that May Day in Pemfield Road, must have depended essentially upon their romantic conditions for the interest with which they inspired him.

There were few prettier or more delightfully situated villas in that aristocratic London suburb than Rose Lodge. And, as plain, sedate, middle-aged Richard Keen walked by it, his memory was turning backward to another May Day like this twenty years ago, to the time when his heart was young and it had lost none of the illusions of life's springtime, when he believed in all things—even in women.

He was yet in sight of Rose Lodge when he came face to face with young Sir Percy Harwood, the only son and heir of the late Sir John Harwood, whose vast estates had made his youthful heir one of the wealthiest men in England. Sir Percy had the mien and bearing of one to the manor born, and he seemed likely to fulfill the proud boast of the noble old family that no scion of their race had ever brought the faintest tinge of dishonor upon their name—that the bright escutcheon of their house was untarnished by any alliance unworthy of the noblest and proudest of them all. The young heir was one to win the hearts of men and women. He was twenty-five and unmarried.

"You come to me at this moment like a good genius, for I am in great trouble!" exclaimed Sir Percy, wringing the hand of his old friend as they met.

"You in trouble when, with your title and wealth, you have all the world at your feet? What is there which you cannot smooth over with your gold?" and Keen smiled a trifle cynically.

"There is a mystery—the life of one whom I love is strangely haunted—threateningly so, too, I fear. Miss Clara Rayburn, my fiancée, lives yonder at Rose Cottage, with Lady Richmond, an estimable widow lady. Strange to say, it seems that an evil shadow hovers over my darling, in the form of a woman. Of this woman I know nothing, and Clara is equally ignorant."

"What has this strange woman done?" asked Keen.

"She has frequently been seen lurking about Rose Lodge. If Clara goes to a window, the glances of the woman always become fixed upon that portal. Again, should Clara go into the grounds, the woman seems to watch her every movement with the keenest interest, while she follows her, keeping on the outside of the wall. Several times she has kept close behind my fiancée upon the street. But she always keeps her face hidden with a thick veil, and when, more than once, Clara has tried to speak to her, she has fled as if in alarm. I believe she has some evil purpose in mind."

"I must admit the woman's conduct is suspicious," said Keen.

Then Sir Percy went on, and, having explained that he was obliged to leave for Paris on the morrow, and that in three days he would return to wed Clara Rayburn, he won from Keen the promise that the latter would watch over his sweetheart during his absence, and seek to solve the mystery of the strange woman.

"But all publicity in the matter must be avoided, lest some evilly-disposed person might weave some story, with the suggestion of a scandal in it. No such thing must be breathed about the spotless girl to whom I mean to give my old and honorable name," Sir Percy said, earnestly.

Just then he saw his betrothed in the villa grounds, and, linking his arm in that of the veteran detective, he led him back to the gate, near which Keen saw a graceful, girlish figure, in a light and airy spring gown, and wide garden hat. The young lady looked up, and Sir Percy saw his friend start and gaze wide-eyed. The young nobleman was astonished and mystified, but Clara Rayburn came forward and greeted her lover with smiling shyness. Keen was presented, and this elderly man seemed strangely fascinated by the young girl, the first sight of whom had moved him so deeply.

All at once Clara grasped Sir Percy's hand impulsively, and exclaimed, excitedly:

"Oh, Percy! There she is now! The strange woman!"

Turning, as his friend did, Keen saw a tall female figure leaning upon the wall, at some distance. The woman was neatly dressed in gray and, though her face was closely veiled, she appeared to be regarding the group at the gate with scrutiny.

"Yes," said Sir Percy. "That is the strange woman who has long haunted Rose Lodge."

At that moment she turned and walked swiftly away toward the city. Keen hastily took leave of the couple at the gate and sauntered after her. He looked strangely sad and troubled.

"Sir Percy has given me one mystery to solve, and fate has given me another. Who is that girl, Clara Rayburn?" he reflected.

Suddenly the woman paused, and, to his surprise, signaled him to approach. He did so, and as he reached her she said:

"I believe, sir, that I have the honor of addressing Richard Keen, formerly celebrated as a London detective?"

The speaker's well-modulated tones told of culture and good breeding. Keen bowed, and the woman continued:

"I am the Countess Despard," and then she raised her veil, showing the dark, beautiful face of a woman of possibly thirty-six. The lines which time had traced art could not entirely hide, but fascinating she would always be. Keen was not aware that he had ever met her previously. But he knew that the Countess Despard was the most famous female gambler of London—that she kept one of those "shady" gaming houses which flourish in the great city under the name of "a club." He had heard that "*The Countess Club*," as the establishment over which the so-called countess presided, was one in which play ran high, and which some young scions of the nobility visited. This woman, with her experience and singular charm, might easily ensnare a young man. Had she some hold upon Sir Percy Harwood? Did she mean to come between the young nobleman and the girl he loved? In this wise ran Keen's thoughts, but he said:

"I am delighted to make the acquaintance of the Countess Despard, of whom I have frequently heard."

The countess laughed.

"Drop all that. Between you and I there is no need for the false and shallow compliments of conventional society. I know what you are, and you know what I am. I shall not attempt to deceive you. You are Sir Percy Harwood's friend; if you would save him from the greatest sorrow and disappointment of his life, meet me to-morrow night at twelve o'clock, at the Countess Club," she said, placing in his hand a dainty card, which had engraved upon it the address of the temple of chance at whose shrine she served as the chief priestess.

"I will be there," Keen promised.

"Thanks. Yonder is my motor-car," she replied, and then she swept onward. Farther on he saw her enter a handsome *Rolls Royce*, which was immediately driven cityward.

At midnight of the following day, Richard Keen was alone in a waiting room at the Countess Club. No one came to him for so long a time, that he began to think the servant who had admitted him had not announced his arrival to the countess. Again the question arose in his mind, "Who is that girl, Clara Rayburn?" The preceding day the sight of her pure young face had reversed a page in the book of his life, which he had supposed was turned back forever.

He was wondering if it could be that the adventuress, whom he had come there to meet, really had it in her power to save Sir Percy Harwood from the greatest calamity which could come to him, which could only mean the loss of the girl he loved, when he heard the countess's voice in the next room.

"So the doctor says he cannot live the night out?" she said.

Another woman answered:

"Yes. The doctor says Ralph Densborough will surely die before morning."

"Oh, God grant that he may die!" the countess exclaimed. "But do not think that a wicked prayer. You do not know all."

"I know there is some secret between you and Densborough, and to-night I heard him swearing that, even in death, he would be revenged upon you. He said he had sent a message to his close friend, Bailey Casson, to come to him, and that Casson had returned the answer that he would be at his bedside by two o'clock to-night, at the latest. The doctor said Densborough would probably live several hours after that. Densborough said he should tell Casson your secret, and pledge him to reveal all to a certain young nobleman."

"And Bailey Casson is as great a rascal as there is in all London. A gambler, libertine and blackmailer. What shall I do? I can hope for no mercy from him! Oh, you must help me! You must keep Casson from seeing Densborough before he dies. I will tell you all. Then your mother's heart will plead for me. In youth I was without a mother and I was brought up by my father, who was a card-sharp and drunkard. Fast young men with money were his dupes. Densborough was of this class. I met him when I was sixteen. Then my father died and I went away with Densborough. He soon cast me off with my girl baby, who was his child, though I was not his wife. Miserable years followed, but I had my child reared among good people and she was taught to believe herself an orphan. If she saw me now she would not know me from a total stranger. I grew to know the world and to know men. My father had taught me every trick the gambler uses at cards. Society closed her doors against me, but I had wit and beauty. I became what I am now—a woman gambler. I make no excuse for that. I might have starved in a garret as a needlewoman, but my father had never had me taught anything useful. What would you do? Only two doors were open to me—the doors of the gambling hell and the portals of a worse life. I chose the former; men became my prey. Then came a time when broken in health and fortune, Ralph Densborough sought me out again. He found my daughter, now grown to womanhood, and learned she was about to become the wife of a good man. Densborough persecuted and blackmailed me, always holding over me the threat that he would bring ruin and disgrace upon my daughter, by telling the man who meant to make her his honored wife who and what she was.

"At last the wretch demanded that I should resume my old relations with him. Then my spirits rose and I had my servants throw him out of my house when I had lashed him with my riding whip, like the cur he is. That very night he was stricken with his present illness. If Casson sees Densborough to-night later, he will go to the man whom my daughter loves with my secret. He will eat his heart out in grief, but he will never wed the daughter of the Countess Despard."

The excited woman paused, and Richard Keen, who had heard all, was assailed by thoughts that half maddened him.

"I am sorry, countess, but I cannot help you, for just before I came here to-night I was discharged and forbidden to enter Densborough's house again," replied the nurse.

"So you, too, fail me. Let me think? Bailey Casson is in the gambling room in this house now. I must keep that man here until Densborough is dead, and I will do it!" cried the countess.

Just then Keen heard a door open in the next room, and the voice of the servant who had admitted him said:

"Beg pardon, countess, but there is a gentleman awaiting you in the reception room."

A moment, and the woman stood before Richard Keen.

"You have kept your word," said she. "And now I will tell you how you can serve your friend, Sir Percy Harwood. Go to the house No. 976 H—— Road, and use any and every means to prevent a man, whom I will show you, from entering that house until you know that Ralph Densborough, who lies almost at death's door in that dwelling, has breathed his last. Then instantly telephone the news to me."

"I will go," said Keen, and his voice sounded hoarse and unnatural.

Then she led him to a door which she opened upon a crack. He saw a man seated at a card table. She whispered:

"He is the man."

After that Keen at once left the house, and the countess entered the gambling room. The clock there indicated a quarter of one o'clock. She believed Casson would not leave the card table while he was winning, and so she meant to lose.

The American game was popular in London, and it had become quite the fad at the Countess Club. Casson had lost at it previously this night, but he insisted that poker should again be their game. The countess knew that Casson was one of the most skillful players in London, but this knowledge did not trouble her now.

The game commenced, and again and again fortune smiled upon the gambler, and the woman and mother, who was losing hundreds and thousands as the price of the future happiness of her child, sat there pale as a ghost, with eyes that were like coals of fire. The clock had struck one, but still she watched the dial, with the great fear in

her heart that when he heard it strike two Casson would remember the promise he had made Densborough. Just as the clock was about to strike again the countess jostled the table, and a heap of the gambler's chips fell clattering upon the floor, and the chime was mingled with that noise.

The gambler scrambled to pick up the fallen chips, heeding nothing else. Then the game went on. The countess listened almost breathlessly at times, hoping to hear the ring of the telephone in the next room. If she was compelled to prolong the losing game she knew her bank would be broken. She had meant that gold should be her daughter's wedding dowry. For years the money from the gambling table had served to provide the home in which her child lived with an impoverished lady of the nobility, who was glad to act as the guardian of the young girl, regarding whose parentage she had been completely deceived, and who knew nothing about the countess.

"Ha! Ha! I should not wonder if it would be said in London on the morrow, that Bailey Casson broke the bank at the Countess Club last night!" cried the gambler, exultantly, as once again he won a heavy pot.

And then, at last, the telephone bell sounded.

"Excuse me, I must answer the telephone!" exclaimed the countess, and she flew from the room. A moment, and from Richard Keen came this message:

"Ralph Densborough is dead!"

The countess turned faint for a moment, but she was about to leave the room when a servant entered, followed by a man, whom she knew was employed by Densborough. In his hand he carried a sealed package, which looked like a bundle of letters. The man bowed respectfully, and said:

"I have here a package for Mr. Bailey Casson. Your man tells me he is in the cardroom."

The countess saw the package was addressed to Casson, in the writing of Densborough, and she knew it contained her life secret. But even then she would not acknowledge defeat.

"I will give the package to Mr. Casson," she said, putting out her hand.

But the messenger drew back, saying::

"I was told by my master to give it to no one but Mr. Casson himself."

And then the door opened, and Bailey Casson stood upon the threshold.

"This is for you, Mr. Casson," said the messenger, and he placed the package in the gambler's hand.

He turned back into the gambling room. The countess followed, benumbed with the sense of defeat, after all the glorious battle she had fought. But she rallied for one last desperate play, with more than life at stake. With the odds a hundred to one against her, she must still pit her woman's wit against the cunning of a shrewd, unscrupulous man. Casson was about to open the package, when the countess exclaimed:

"Wait! Let us finish this hand before we delay longer. I think I hold the winning cards."

The gambler put the package beside his chips and the game was resumed. Then the countess played with all her skill and Casson lost, and lost steadily. But he was game, and he did not abandon the play as she had feared he might. Finally he played away his last chip, and he had no more money. Then he lost his diamonds and his watch. He offered his "I O U," but the countess would not accept it. She was waiting to make him play for a stake that was more precious to her than millions.

"I am broke! Ruined! Oh, if I had but one more stake! My good luck must come back! If I could only stick this reverse out!" cried the gambler at last.

"How about your package? It's sealed as if it held valuables—diamonds, perhaps—I don't mind taking a flyer to accommodate an old friend, though it's like buying a pig in a bag!" said the countess, and she made her voice sound careless.

The gambler, who had not the faintest suspicion that the contents of the package concerned her, grasped at the suggestion with desperate eagerness.

"Yes, yes! I'll stake the package, unopened, against a hundred pounds!" he cried.

"Done!" the countess gasped.

Then Casson dealt the cards. The countess looked into her hand, and her heart leaped into her throat. She put up an ante of ten pounds before the gambler dealt. It was agreed a hundred pounds should be the limit. The countess called for two cards, and Casson gave them to her, and took three himself. Casson, after making good the ante, raised the same by ten pounds. Then the countess saw his bet, and went eighty pounds better. Casson made good, and thus reached the limit, and called her.

They showed their hands. Casson held four aces, but the countess held a straight flush.

"I win!" she almost screamed, as she clutched the package which the gambler had placed before her, as security for chips to the value of a hundred pounds.

Casson staggered out of the room. She heard the door close behind him and she sank upon her knees.

"This shall be the last night of the Countess Club," she murmured, anon.

Meanwhile, Richard Keen was hastily approaching the house. At the door he paused, reflecting:

"When I saw the girl called Clara Rayburn at Rose Lodge, it seemed to me that the maid, who was my first and only love twenty years ago, was again before me, for Clara is the image of what her mother was when I loved and lost her. I did not know the countess was the girl whom I had loved in her youth until I overheard her story in her house, for time has changed her wonderfully. But now I know all, yet I will keep the secret always and Clara shall not suffer for her mother's sins. She shall become Sir Percy's bride."

From his bosom he took a lock of woman's hair tied with a knot of scarlet ribbon. Once he pressed it to his lips and then cast it from him with a tear upon its shining coil.

But a little later he stood before the countess in the gambling room, once more the calm, sedate man, to whom romance and sentiment seemed strangers.

"Ralph Densborough is dead, as I telephoned you, but I have just learned that he managed to elude my watchfulness, and before his death sent a messenger here with a package for Casson, which contains your secret. All is lost, unless that package can be intercepted yet," said Keen calmly.

"All is saved, for I have the package!" cried the countess.

"Thank goodness!" muttered Keen.

And when he revealed his identity, she sank into his arms and their lips met in a lasting kiss.

Keep a lookout for a startling story of mystery, love, and intrigue in our next issue. It is by a well-known fiction writer, and will surely please our readers.

THE QUEEN OF THE AIR

By FRANCIS WORCESTER DOUGHTY

THE cloud which had been hovering over old Salvadore broke as Jack Fortescue reached that point on the Lago Lugano where its usually placid water are suddenly enclosed by wild, precipitous mountains, pine clad, dark and gloomy, darker than ever now because of the approaching storm.

"Hey! Hello! Hey! Hello!"

Again and again Jack shouted as only an American can shout, but his two friends did not hear and consequently did not answer.

The stormcloud seemed to have suddenly dropped between them; the other boats were being driven on toward Porlezza, and what could Jack do under the circumstances but cling desperately to his overturned single skull and shout with all his might:

"Hey! Hello! Hey! Hello!"

It was now as black as night, and the wind was whirling past the poor fellow with that fearful force often assumed during these sudden storms, which come sweeping down from the Alps to ruffle the waters of the Swiss *lagos*. Dire disasters have happened from this cause; what happened now was the sweeping of Jack Fortescue's overturned boat into the "Gooseneck," that narrow rift in the mountain through which a fraction of the waters of Lugano escape, to be precipitated over *des Capuchines*, a charming little waterfall Swiss tourists read of, but so seldom see.

On flew the boat through the sweeping torrents of rain, Jack holding on desperately, and never guessing what had occurred. In less than three minutes the boat was caught in the suck of the falls, and a sudden drop into a miniature maelstrom came.

What became of the boat after that Jack never knew. His fall was into the pool, and so he escaped the rocks. He had need to congratulate himself on the presence of mind which prompted him to turn over on his back and lie quiet, and he was swept down the "Gooseneck" through the darkness, now shouting for help, now losing heart, and wondering if help would ever come, until all at once he heard the sound of oars and saw a light flashing before him through the storm.

"Hello, there! Hello! Boat, ahoy! Help me out of this and I'll never forget you!" shouted Jack, rising in the water and waving his hand to the young girl who was pulling the boat across the "Gooseneck," made visible now by the flash of the lantern in the bow.

She saw him—the lantern was a reflector, and its light struck full on Jack's face. Yet the girl did not answer; she seemed to hesitate, and was inclined to pull away.

But our young American was of a different mind; with a few bold strokes he managed to throw himself across the course of the boat. When the girl saw him coming she lay back on her oars and let him come.

"I suppose I may get in," said Jack, catching the gunwale—he scarcely expected to be understood.

The rower turned a face toward him pretty enough to make Jack forget his danger, and replied in perfect English, but in hurried, agitated tones:

"I cannot refuse you, sir. I'll put you ashore, but you must go right away—you'll promise me that?"

It was only a few rods to the old, ruined tower on the shore, from whose windows lights faintly twinkled—evidently the girl's destination was there.

"I'll promise you anything," said Jack; "anything at all to get out of this wretched fix."

He climbed into the boat, scarcely giving it a tremor so deftly did he throw himself over its side, and then as the girl seemed embarrassed and made no reply, he went on to tell of his accident, offering to pay for any accommodation he might receive in the tower where she admitted, by a silent inclination of the head, she belonged, a faint blush overspreading her face when the last proposition was put.

"I don't wish for your money, sir," she replied hastily. "You cannot enter the tower—it is impossible—but I will show you a path which will take you back to Lugano, if that is where you are from."

"I belong in New York, and fancy you also may be an American by the way you speak," replied Jack, coolly. "Shan't I take the oars and make the landing? No? I can do it all right, but, of course, I shan't insist."

"No, no! I am accustomed to the boat," replied the girl, hurriedly. "I am sorry to refuse you shelter, sir, but I cannot help it. My father is very peculiar and we live alone. Under other circumstances he might be glad to meet a New Yorker, for, as you have guessed, we once lived there, but now——"

"Ariel! Ariel! Who is that in the boat? How dare you bring a stranger here!" interrupted a man's voice.

They had now gained the little landing at the foot of the quaint old tower, which stood upon a rocky platform perhaps twenty feet up the cliffs.

Suddenly the upper window, behind which Jack had observed the light burning, was raised and a man thrust his head out.

He held a large reflecting lantern, with which he flashed down a light of wonderful power upon the boat.

The girl sprang out upon the landing.

"Go!" she whispered. "Take the boat—pull away as fast as you can, if you value your life!"

Then calling out something in French, so rapidly spoken that Jack could not follow her, she ran toward the door of the tower, opened it and disappeared.

But Jack was in no hurry to take his departure.

The old man was still leaning out of the window waving the lantern back and forth and looking down at him.

His was a curious face; thin, attenuated to a degree, hollow, sunken cheeks; flashing eyes of intense power; a broad forehead, from which the gray, stubby hair went straight up. He was clad in a greasy old dressing gown, gathered about his spare frame in such a fashion as to convey the hint that there was little beneath it.

"Who are you?" he called down in a thin, cracked voice. "Ariel says she rescued you from the Gooseneck. Why don't you go away? What do you stand there gaping at me for? *Mon dieu!* One would think I was some wild beast in a menagerie! *Sacre bleu!* Begone!"

"If you'll show me the path to Lugano I'll go," replied Jack. "I've no wish to intrude; all I asked was a chance to dry myself by the fire, and——"

"Stop!" interrupted the old man; "an idea strikes me—you are an American, Ariel says. Do you know anything of machinery?"

"Certainly I do. I went through a complete course of mechanical and electrical engineering," replied Jack.

Perhaps he was glad of an excuse to penetrate the mystery of the old tower, and learn more of the beautiful Ariel who had so earnestly warned him off.

"Ha! Then, by Heaven, you are just the man I need!" responded the strange figure at the tower window. "Ariel! Ariel! Open the door! Come right up, sir! You shall dry your clothes by my fire. Ha, ha, ha! Dry them thoroughly, so that you will never need to dry them again!"

There was no one to be seen when the door of the tower opened. The movements of the latch seemed to be controlled by a chain pulled from above.

"Come up!" called the old man from the head of the stairs. "Come right up!"

Jack thought he heard a low moan behind him, and his heart almost failed him, for he distinctly heard some one whisper out of the darkness: "Don't go!"

But Jack was not to be frightened so easily. "I'll see the end of this," he determined; "and, what's more, I'll see that girl again." But Ariel was invisible then, although he tried his best to penetrate the darkness behind him, and so Jack went upstairs.

The old man was waiting for him, lantern in hand; he stood with his back against a door and fixed his eyes upon Jack.

"Look here, young man," he said. "I want help—perhaps you can give it to me. My brain is all in a whirl. I go over and over the same ground until I begin to think I am actually going mad. *Mon Dieu!* Mad with the greatest discovery of the age completed—yes, completed, if I could only adjust the one cog which stands between me and success."

"I'm sure I'll be pleased to help you if I can, sir," replied Jack, quietly.

"What's your name?"

"Jack Fortescue."

"An American?"

"Yes."

"Ha! A great country. I lived in New York five years. I was forced to leave because I did not dare to proceed with my invention under the eyes of your Yankee mechanics; they would have robbed me; they would have stolen my ideas at the very moment of success, but around here the people know nothing of the invention. What do I care that they call me the crazy man of the old Torrelli Tower! Some night I shall fly away and leave them—perhaps to-night! Who knows? But come in—come in!"

He flung open the door and ushered Jack into a small room, long and narrow, following the shape of the tower.

The floor was bare, and, instead of ceiling, Jack saw above him a sort of penthouse roof constructed of strong canvas, fastened down at the sides, and supported on a light wooden frame.

A few feet from the door rose a canvas partition, cutting off what he judged to be the largest part of the room, and through the middle of this projected a curious object—so singular in its appearance that the young man's attention was riveted upon it at once.

It appeared to be a portion of a huge cone made of plates of solid steel, closely riveted, to which was attached a curiously complicated steering-gear.

Projecting on either side, partly hidden by the curtain, were fan-like attachments, which seemed to work on eccentrics.

But so much of the machine was concealed that it was quite impossible to guess its full design of purpose.

The old man carefully shut the door, put up two heavy iron bars, and turned the key with trembling hand.

"Mr. Fortescue," he said, speaking in a high-pitched voice, which showed plainly enough the intense excitement under which he was laboring, "you see before you the result of years of toil and anxious thought now all but completed. Don't ask me its nature, or its intended use, for I communicate that to no one; nor is it necessary that you should know unless you can aid me. All I want is to complete this rudder. You will see by examining it that it works from both sides, power being communicated by means of these chains; but the difficulty is to control the opening and closing of the fans—that is to say, so that any individual fan can have the power cut off instantly. Here, examine it for yourself and the case will be plainer. But first, it is but fair that I should introduce myself. I am Professor Guimard!"

He drew himself up to his full height, his whole body in a tremble, his eyes blazing with that same wild light.

Jack bowed and tried hard to make it appear that he was greatly impressed, although inasmuch as he had never heard of Guimard, this was somewhat difficult.

"I'm sure I shall be pleased to help you, if I can, sir," he said, "but in these wet clothes——"

"Presently, presently, you shall dry them, sir!" broke in the professor, eagerly; "now, then, just look here——"

The professor launched out into a detailed explanation of his wants.

Jack took hold like an old hand, and the conversation for the next few moments related entirely to mechanics.

Meanwhile the storm seemed to be increasing. The lightning played about the old tower, thunder crashed, and rain rattled upon the canvas roof.

"I see what you want," cried Jack, after a little. "It is very simple, just a cog connection here—etc., etc." Jack told it off like the true machinist that he was.

Guimard gave a cry of joy.

"Right! Right!" he exclaimed. "That is it. My muddled brain could not grasp it. *Mon Dieu!* but I am too weak to forge the piece to-night. Could you—would you, young man? If you will, I—I——"

"Why I could make it in half an hour if I had the means at hand," said Jack.

"They are at hand! You shall do it now. You shall see this great invention in its fulness; you shall see it work! Oh, I promise you it will revolutionize the world."

He laid his hand on the canvas and was about to pull it aside, when a cry was heard without the door.

"Father! Father! Don't do it! Oh, don't!"

The professor turned pale and stamped his foot in rage.

"Begone, girl!" he cried. "Why do you interfere with us? Leave me to manage my own affairs, or——"

The rest was in French.

Jack heard low sobs and retreating footsteps.

Professor Guimard tore away the canvas and the mysterious invention stood fully revealed.

A great cigar-shaped hollow cone, some twenty feet in length by four in width, provided with seats amidships; two sails attached to masts extending up into the peak of the canvas roof; twelve paddles, six on a side, projecting down from the edge of the cone. On the side was painted:

QUEEN OF THE AIR.

In short, it was a flying machine, and Jack so exclaimed.

"Yes, yes, yes! It is! It is so!" cried Guimard. "It is mine; all mine! No one shall steal it from me! Not a

man lives who has ever done an hour's work on it but myself! No one in the whole world knows it is here! But you—you, Mr. Fortescue—shall be the exception. Don't be afraid; oh, yes; you—you are perfectly safe. You shall share the secret with me and share my triumph! Don't heed what Ariel may have said to you—the time for all that has past. Do what I ask, and I—I—I will reward you well! See, you shall go to my forge in the basement and make it for me, and then you shall put it on, and then, and then—why, then we will fly together—the dreams of Regiomontanus, Sextus of Ratisbon, Kircher, Porta, Schott, Gassendi, Lana, Ramus, Bishop Wilkens, and the Montgolfiers shall be realized. We will fly together to fame and fortune, and you shall never leave this tower until the work is done!"

He rattled off the names of the old medieval would-be aeronauts with amazing rapidity, his eyes flashed fire, his hands trembled as he continued to speak pointing out the workings of the machine.

"And here," he added, "is the lever which controls it all. Electricity! One turn of this handle, on goes the current, and the paddles start. Don't be afraid! My bird's wings are chained. It cannot escape. You will perceive that it rests on a pivot, and that, by attaching this bevel gear, I convey to it a rotary motion which has enabled me to pursue my experiments in this room, although the natural bent of its force would impel it to rise. Stand where you are, Fortescue, and you shall see it work. All that is now needed is to apply your idea to the rudder, and the work is done, the whole system of travel will be revolutionized, and I——"

Professor Guimard had his hand on the lever—perhaps he moved it too far, throwing too strong a current into the wires which controlled his strange invention—perhaps the lightning did it, making connection with the battery within the machine in some mysterious way.

At all events just then came a flash of blinding intensity, a thunderclap which shook the old tower to its very foundation, and all at once the paddles began to work back and forth.

"Look out! It's off the center pivot!" shouted Guimard, leaping back. "Merciful God! What now!"

Useless warning!

To reach the door was impossible, to remain standing where they were meant death.

Around and around the enclosure the huge steel monster began gyrating, its paddles thrashing the air with fearful force, tearing itself loose from the chains which held it, and these flying hither and thither—for they were still attached to the airship—made it dangerous to move, dangerous to stand still, dangerous to exist in the presence of this strange creation, which even its creator could no longer control.

"Help! Help! Oh, Fortescue, think of something! Do something!" the professor screamed, prancing about the confined space, pursued by the terrible monster, loose for death and destruction.

"The current! What controls the current?" roared Jack, his voice scarcely audible above the awful din of the thrashing chains, the grinding of the huge fans, and the grating of the steel upon the sanded floor.

He did not hear, and, no wonder, for the noise was awful, but above it all Ariel's voice was heard.

"Father! Father!" she screamed without. "Open the door—open the door!"

She flung herself against it again and again as Jack and the professor ran wildly on—ran for their lives—ran because to stop for a single instant meant death. Twice Jack got a flying chain against his head—twice the professor stumbled and all but sealed his doom, for the merciless fan was close upon him each time, when, with a mighty effort, he regained his footing and dashed on.

"The door! Open the door!" yelled Jack, for he caught Ariel's words as he ran.

"Open the door!" she cried. "Open the door! I can save you! I can turn off the current from where I stand!"

"Oh, God! Oh, God have mercy!" groaned Guimard, as they ran. "This is justice! This is righteous retribution! Blood for blood! It has come at last! The bones of dead men lie beneath this tower! I would have killed you, too, but now—but now——"

Faster—faster—still faster!

With every second those dreadful fans seemed to gain additional power.

"The key! The key!" shouted Jack, reaching back his hand, for the professor had drawn nearer.

One of the chains struck him a cruel blow, and dashed his hand down, but, nothing daunted, he tried again, and this time got it, for Guimard drew the key from his pocket, and succeeded in bringing it within Jack's reach.

Around the room they flew. This time as they passed the door Jack managed to dislodge the bars.

They fell to the floor with a thud as he went rushing on.

"Ariel! Stand by us, Ariel! I'll open the door next time!" he shouted.

Whether he was heard or not it was impossible to say, for the girl kept right on screaming and pounding upon the door.

Jack nerved himself for the final effort. When next he came abreast of the door, he managed to get the key in the lock and give it a turn.

The door flew open, revealing Ariel with her hair hanging loosely about her shoulders, her eyes blazing with excitement.

"Give me a moment—only a moment!" she cried.

Too late!

Even as she spoke a flying chain struck her.

It wound itself about her frail form and dragged her on.

"Save me! Save me!" she shrieked.

Who could save her now? Not Jack! He had tried it already.

He fell back on the instant and tried to seize her, and the chain caught him, too.

Like a flash they were bound together. Jack's arms were tightly clasped about the girl—he could not move.

But he could use his eyes if not his hands. He saw the old man make one mad leap and gain the deck of the machine.

"I have won at last!" he shrieked, madly—and mad now he doubtless was. "She flies! She flies! My queen! The Queen of the Air!"

He pulled a lever and instantly the huge airship rose, tearing its way through the frail canvas roof.

Still clutching Ariel in his arms, still imprisoned by the chain, Jack went with it.

Ariel's head dropped upon his shoulder—she had fainted. —keeping one arm around her, Jack, with a mighty effort, managed to free the other hand—his right hand—and clutched the chain.

In a second they were in the air, floating above the tower.

Guimard was shouting wildly. Looking up, Jack could see him dancing like a madman on the deck of the machine.

"She flies! Oh, yes, she flies!" he kept yelling.

Up! Up! Up!

Jack closed his eyes in horror; his brain reeled, for he could feel it going—he realized that the chain was un-

winding, and, worse than all, his hand was losing its power—another second and he lost his hold.

Down! Down! Down!

Both arms about the unconscious girl—down into the "Gooseneck." It saved them! The water was deep; they were being swept along by the rushing stream.

Looking up, Jack could see a brilliant flashlight sweeping the heavens above him. Straining his eyes, he could dimly discern the outlines of the huge airship for a single instant, then the light vanished and he saw it no more.

Winding one arm tighter about the girl, Jack used the other and his legs to good advantage; it took time and strength to do it, but at last he gained the shore.

"Ariel! Ariel! Ariel!"

Again and again Jack called her name—called her back to life, perhaps, for she was almost gone.

There is no more to tell, except to quote the brief explanation given to Jack's two chums when they met at the hotel at Lugano next day.

"Yes, I'm married, boys. I fell in with my wife last night, no matter how nor where. She was alone in the world and utterly friendless—so I married her. I'm satisfied. I hope you are."

It would have made no difference if they had been otherwise, for Jack Fortescue was a young man of independent fortune and strong ideas, and usually did as he pleased.

And the airship?

Its wreck was seen floating in the Mediterranean off the Sicilian coast.

Weeks afterward Jack read the account in an old paper, picked up in a cafe at Naples.

The account referred to the strange object seen as presumably some newly-invented torpedo, and expressed regret that it should have sunk before the steamer from whose deck it was discovered could approach near enough to more closely inspect it.

Only Jack and Ariel knew that it could have been nothing else than *The Queen of the Air*.

RESCUE BREAKS UP "SPOOKY" SEANCE

SEVEN girls touched finger-tips across a rough table in a tumble-down brownstone house that lies under the shadow of Garrett Mountain, Paterson, N. J., and waited for something to happen. Something usually did at "The Haunted House," as Pat Rafferty's cottage was known. For Rafferty had mastered the mystic art of rattling hidden chains and glassware, with a few books on spiritualism thrown around for local color.

Rafferty muttered and the seance party waited. Out of the gathering dark came a faint cry, borne on the wind: "Help! Help!" This time Rafferty jumped, for it was not a part of his program.

Skirted and turbanned, the Irish-American "Medium" rushed out of doors, fourteen young men and girls after him. The cry was repeated, this time louder. Rafferty set out toward the old Devlin Sandstone Quarry, long since abandoned, whence the call for help seemed to come. Close at his skirted heels came Chief Yeoman Joseph Donlevy, of Paterson, one of the party. In the gathering dusk he saw the cause of the alarm.

Two small boys, using the footpath across the steep mountainside, had missed their footing and slid toward the brink of the quarry precipice, a sheer drop of 200 feet to the rocks below.

The first had caught a sapling in his descent; the second had caught hold of the first boy and dangled there, his legs over the edge.

Meanwhile Police Sergeant Clune, from the towpath of the Morris Canal, had seen the boys clinging to their slender support. He telephoned for the police patrol, but before it came Rafferty and Donlevy had brought them back to safety. The "Medium" told Clune that they had run off before their identity was learned. Both were about fourteen years of age. The seance broke up then and there.

"The Haunted House," which has more or less celebrity in Paterson, is an old building on the estate of Catholina Lambert, millionaire silk manufacturer. Rafferty and his brother have had it rent-free as a residence, where he entertains at his amateur seances.

WHERE YOUR DREAMS COME FROM

DREAMS originate in the brain. The brain has many parts, and some parts of it may be asleep while others are not. If all parts of the brain are actually asleep, it is said there can be no dreams. We have dreams about things which seem very natural while we are having them, and which we know would be impossible if we were wholly awake, because those parts of the brain which control the other parts are probably asleep while the dream is taking place, and it is then that we have those fantastic and highly imaginative dreams, for the brain is not under control in every sense.

We used to believe that dreams have no purpose, just as now we know that they have no meaning. But it has been discovered that dreams have a purpose in that they protect our sleep. You see, every dream is started by some disturbance or excitement of the body of mind. Something may be pressing or touching us while we sleep, or a strange sound may start a dream, or perhaps it is some uncomfortable position in which we are lying or trouble in the stomach on account of eating something we should not, says the *Book of Wonders*. Whatever it may be, those things wake up some part of the brain, because if all parts of the brain were asleep, we could not feel or hear anything. Any such disturbance or excitement would naturally excite the whole brain and wake us up completely if it were not for dreams.

The dream takes care of this and enables the rest of the body and brain to sleep while one or more parts of the brain are disturbed and even perhaps awake. We may perhaps have become uncovered in some way. This would produce a cold feeling and might wake a part of the brain and cause a dream about skating or some other winter amusement or experience, or even perhaps one about falling through the ice, and still we might not be uncovered so much that it would make any great difference. The dream comes and we go on with our sleep without waking up, whereas if it were not for the dream we would awaken. In other words, dreams are just another wise provision of nature which enables us to go right on and get the rest we need, even if our digestion is out of order, or some part of our brain is disturbed through something we read about, or were told of, or we thought of while still awake.

THE FATAL PRINTS

A Serial Detective Story

By WILLIAM S. HALL

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE MAN WITH THE LONG SHOES

"STRANGE, dark thoughts flitted through my mind, which I could not shake off. I lay there on the cot all night, and in the morning the surgeon would not let me leave. Noon came, and with a message from the surgeon that a young lady had called to see me. I told him to show her in, and a few minutes later he came in with a lady in black, wearing a heavy veil. On seeing me, she threw her veil back and exclaimed:

"'Oh, thank God, you are alive!'

"It was Dora Creighton. The shock came near killing me, for I regarded it as a declaration of love on her part. The surgeon saw the effect, and interfered at once. When I regained my composure she was gone. I looked around the room in search of her.

"'Where is she?' I asked.

"'She has gone home, where she will receive messages as to your condition,' said the surgeon. 'We can't have you receive any more visits until your nervous system is in a little better condition.'

"I submitted, and for several days I lay there surrounded by flowers. They were sweeter from the fact that I knew whence they came. At last I was allowed to leave the hospital, and on the day I left I found Graham and Tillie waiting at the door to receive me. They had been coming every day, but had not been allowed to see me. Their devotion made a deep impression, and I thought I could see good stuff in both of them. I was confined to my room several days after leaving the hospital, as it would have been imprudent to go out much, particularly in the evening. During the time I was confined to my quarters I did some mighty hard thinking, boys. The truth is, I had no more idea of who shot me than I had of the complexion of the inhabitants of the moon. I never even saw a dark figure, so I could not say, with the least accuracy, whether it was done by a man, woman, or spring gun. But I was torn by a horrible suspicion that it lay between two factions. At one time I could not shake off the conviction that it was some fiend anxious to avenge the Coman gang, and who had taken that method of doing so. At other times I was terribly suspicious that Cochran, in his mad jealousy, had waylaid me and fired the shot. I remembered that he left the house first that evening, the only time I had ever known him to do so. The fierce look of hate, and the dark, ominous scowl that was plainly visible on his face, as he left the house, made an impression on my mind which I could not shake off. The more I thought about it, the more suspicious I became that he fired the shot. I knew nothing about him, but yet I knew that he was jealous, and had reason to believe that I was about to cut him out in the affections of the rich heiress. Full of these conflicting thoughts, I took a taxi one bright, sunny afternoon, and paid a visit to Dora. She received me with a cordiality that was very soothing to my feelings.

"'I am so glad to see you out again, Mr. Croly!' she said, as she led the way into the parlor.

"'Thanks for your kindness,' I said in reply. 'I am very glad to be out again.'

"'Now do you know who did the shooting, Mr. Croly?' she asked.

"'No, nor do I even know whom to suspect,' I answered. 'The police are on the lookout, but they have no clue whatever.'

"'Oh, I do think it perfectly horrible, that such things can be done right in the heart of a great city like this.'

"'Yes, but you must recollect that under cover of darkness a great many things can be done that will defy detection.'

"'Yes, I know that; but it is none the less horrible on that account.'

"'Of course not. Detectives have many secret enemies who seek to get rid of them by such means. By the way, allow me to thank you for your visit the day after I was hurt.'

"She blushed, and yet looked pleased, saying:

"'I was so sorry they would not let me stay and talk to you. But the doctor said it would excite you, and so he would not let me see you again.'

"'The surgeon knew what was best for me, I guess, as the wound affected some of the nervous tissues. I am all right now, and am going to resume my work to-morrow.'

"'Are you not going to hunt for your would-be assasin?'

"'I shall be on the lookout for him, of course, but will not let up on the case I have in hand, particularly as I have no clue as to who the shooter is.'

"'You will come and see me again?' she asked.

"'Yes, as often as I can, if you will allow me to.'

"Allow you? I shall always be glad to see you, Mr. Croly. Do be careful and not get hurt again.'

"I came away, and felt like a new man since she had shown such solicitude about my danger. That evening I called on Graham up at Shoemaker Truxton's, and found him paying court to Tillie in their little parlor. They received me with great cordiality. Tillie threw her arms around my neck and kissed me.

"'Do you allow that, Billy?' I asked, turning to Graham.

"'Yes, whenever you return it,' he said, whereupon I returned her kiss and hug in the honest, old-fashioned way.

"After spending a half-hour with the shoemaker's family, I said to Graham:

"'Put on your hat and come with me. I want to talk with you.'

"'Yes,' he said, rising, and proceeding to don his hat.

"'Has anything happened?' Tillie asked.

"'Nothing at all,' I replied.

"Out on the street, I said to Graham:

"'That mark on the shoe is still my only clue. What

have you been thinking of during the time since I was shot?'

"'I have been trying to think who it was that brought me a pair of number 7 shoes to half-sole about the time you speak of.'

"'Well, what's the result of your brain-work?'

"'I recollect a young man, perhaps about your age and size, who brought me a pair of gaiters, number 7's, to be half-soled. And I recollect putting the mark on them.'

"'Now, do you recollect anything about the man?'

"'He had a mustache—a dark-brown one—and a small mole on one side of his face—I can't remember which side it was on—about an inch from his nose. I recollect, too, that he chewed tobacco, for he offered me some when he took a chew. Mr. Truxton took a chew. I didn't, for I don't chew, though I smoke.'

"'Anything else about him?' I asked.

"'Not that I can remember.'

"'Have you ever seen the man since?'

"'No.'

"'Did you talk with him?'

"'Only a few words.'

"'You would know him again?'

"'Yes, I think I would.'

"This was a rather vague description of one man in a population of over 5,000,000 people. I had to hunt him out. 'Dark mustache.' How many thousands of such there were in New York. 'Small mole on one side of face near nose—don't know which side.' Indefinite in the extreme. Yet I went back to my quarters, resolved to renew the search every day. Somehow I felt it in my bones that some day I would catch the murderer, and so I never gave up. The very next day, after getting the description from Graham, I was walking along Broadway, when I met a man with a mustache and mole on his face. I came near jumping forward and collaring him, so great was the impulse to do so. But I luckily restrained myself, and proceeded to shadow him. The more I looked at him the stronger became my belief that I had stumbled on the murderer of the old miser. Then, too, his actions seemed to be those of a crook. I followed him several blocks, and had about made up my mind to arrest him on suspicion, anyhow, when I glanced down at his feet. Great whales, boys. That man had the longest, slimmest feet I ever saw hung to a pair of legs. They must have been twelves. I never saw anything like it, and I turned away in disgust, actually wishing somebody would kick me."

CHAPTER TWELVE

WORMING UP THE CLUE

"WE meet with many curious disappointments in following up a clue, as you all know, and after a while, we get used to it and don't mind it much.

"So it was with me. I swore at myself for about ten minutes, and then resumed my tramp up Broadway. The description and little experience I had received sharpened my wits, and I glanced keenly to the right and left, as I moved past the throng of people on the great thoroughfare. It was amazing to see the number of people who had moles on their faces. I had never noticed them before, and thought but little of them. But now they came by me in bewildering profusion. Old men and young men—mustached and beardless, came by with moles on their faces. Even women, old and young, ugly and beautiful, came by in silks and satins, with moles to the right and left of their noses, as if to overwhelm me with their profusion.

"'Hang the moles!' I gasped, coming to a full stop and gazing around in a sort of helpless way.

"'Why, Mr. Croly!' cried a silvery voice at my elbow, and, looking around, I found Dora Creighton by my side.

"Away went moles and dark mustaches. Away went everything but the thoughts of the beautiful woman by my side. I caught both of her hands in mine, and said:

"'Ah! I am glad to see you. Will you let me walk with you in the crowd?'

"'Of course I will. I am not used to such a crowded thoroughfare as this, you know,' and she took my arm, as though she really desired my protection.

"She chatted cheerily as we walked along, and just as we passed a well-known confectioner's, I suggested ice-cream. She accepted, and in we went. Quite a number of ladies and gentlemen were seated at tables eating ice-cream and drinking cooling summer drinks. We seated ourselves at a table and ordered ice-cream.

"'Hello, Croly!' called a familiar voice, as I felt a hand on my shoulder.

"It was Ned Crenshaw. The result was an introduction to Dora, and Ned sat down and joined us. He was handsome and chatty, and I saw that Dora was quite charmed with him. He invited us to the theater that evening, and Dora accepted for both of us. We went, and when we parted after the performance was over Dora asked him to call on her. I thought nothing of it at the time, and escorted her home as if my responsibility was a great happiness. The next day I resumed my search for the mustached man with a mole on his face, and No. 7 shoes on his feet. I found many moles, but the shoes did not always tally with the description. It was a great study of physiognomy though, and I enjoyed it for a while. That evening I called on Dora again, and found Cochran there—the first time since the shooting. He seemed to assume a very hard, set expression of countenance when I entered the room.

"'Good-evening, Mr. Cochrane,' I said, bowing quite ceremoniously to him.

"'Good-evening,' he returned, rather stiffly.

"'Oh, you two have not met since the night of the shooting,' said Dora.

"'No,' I said, 'I have not had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Cochrane since that night.'

"He colored slightly.

"'No, we have not met since that evening. I hope you have quite recovered from your wound?'

"'Quite recovered,' I said, and then I set down close to Dora, who had seated herself on a sofa.

"Just then I looked him full in the face. He was looking at Dora. The light was shining in his face, and by its aid I noticed that his mustache was a dark-brown, and that a mole was also on his left cheek about an inch from his nose! The discovery startled me. Why had I not noticed that before? I glanced down at his well-blacked shoes. There, too, I was startled. If they were not sevens, then I was no judge of such things. The discovery nearly set me wild with thinking.

"'If I arrest him, Dora will think I did it through jealousy,' I reasoned, and so I sat there and tried in vain to get a glimpse at the soles of his shoes.

"At last he arose and left the house again in advance of me. When I left, I went in another direction than the one I usually took. The next day I went up and saw Graham.

"'Billy, we will rig up to-night and go hunting,' I said to

him. I want you to look at a chap and see if you ever saw him before anywhere.'

"'All right,' he said.

"That evening he came down to my quarters, and together we put on our disguises and went out on the street.

"'There is a young lady on ——— street, whom a young man visits,' I said to him. 'He tallies with your description of the young man with mole and mustache. I want you to see him, and tell me if he is the man.'

"We waited near the boarding-house where Dora was living for nearly an hour. To my infinite surprise I saw Ned Crenshaw come along, dressed to kill, go up the stoop and ring the bell. The girl admitted him, and in a few minutes he was chatting gayly with Dora in the parlor. I felt a jealous pang shoot through my heart, but I said nothing. The truth is, I didn't feel like talking. By and by Dave Cochran came along, and walked slowly by us. Graham saw him and gave a start.

"'By the holy scooper!' he exclaimed, in an undertone, turning to me, 'that's the man.'

"'Are you sure?'

"'Yes.'

"'That's all right, then. We will wait until he comes out, and then see where he goes to roost.'

"'Is he the man you wanted to have me see?'

"'Yes.'

"'Well, he's the chap, and I'll swear to it.'

"'Very well. We'll see what kind of shoes he wears.'

"Two hours later Cochran came out alone, leaving Crenshaw in possession of the field. There was a terrible scowl on his face as he came down the stop and walked away. I followed him like a shadow, and found that he was living in a cheap boarding-house farther downtown.

"Then I sent Graham back to his home, and went to my own apartment. It was another hard thinking night for me. I was at a loss to know how to proceed to make a case against him. The footprint in the mortar would be very strong circumstantial evidence against him, but not sufficient to convict. I didn't wish to make a failure, and so I laid awake the greater part of the night. How could I make sure that the shoes he had on were even marked at all? That was one thing that had to be ascertained. I made up my mind to apply for board at his boarding-house, and by the next evening I was installed in a room adjoining his at Mrs. Simmons'. I met him at the supper-table, so disguised that he never dreamed of my identity.

"After supper I saw him leave the house, and from the care with which he had dressed, judged that he had gone to call on Dora. I retired to my room, and prepared to use some skeleton keys which I had procured. Watching my opportunity, I unlocked the door of his room, entered, relocked the door, and lit the gas. I knew that any one seeing a light in his room would naturally conclude he was in there. There was a very common-looking trunk in a corner of the room, and a few clothes hanging to a rack on the wall. To open that trunk was the work of but a moment, and then I began a search. To my surprise I found several tools that might be used by burglars, and yet they were legitimate mechanical implements. But a fine steel saw for the purpose of sawing through iron lay at the bottom of the trunk wrapped in a piece of newspaper.

"'That's good circumstantial evidence,' I said, 'in view of the iron bars of the miser's residence being found sawed in two.'

"Having searched the trunk thoroughly, and replaced everything just as I found it, I closed and locked it. Then I glanced around the room to see what else I should examine, when my eyes lighted on a pair of gaiter shoes under the bed. I hastily picked them up and examined them.

"'Great heavens!' I gasped as I turned them up and saw the fatal marks on them.

"There were the half-soles that had been so plainly marked in the mortar, but considerably worn since then. Then I recollected the direction in which one of the bars that connected the two rings pointed—lengthwise the shoes. This was the same.

"'He is the man!' I gasped, dropping into a chair and glaring at the shoe.

"Ten minutes later I was back in my own room lying on my bed and thinking what I should next do.

"'I am morally certain he is the man,' I muttered to myself, 'but how am I to prove it?'

"That was the question about which I resolved to consult the chief. Early the next morning I was at the chief's quarters waiting for him. When he came, I told him everything.

"'That's the man, Ben,' he said, after I had told my story, 'and your fortune is made if we can prove him guilty.'

"'That's what I am troubled about most, chief,' I said.

"'We have pretty good circumstantial evidence,' he said. 'Graham can swear to putting the mark on the shoes, and you can swear to finding the print of the shoe in the murdered man's room; then a search of his trunk will turn up a saw for cutting bars of iron—all of which, coupled with the motive, will make a pretty strong case against him.'

"'What do you think was the motive, chief?' I asked.

"'Oh, that is very plain. You say the heiress of the old miser told you that she knew him out in Paterson. She may have told him that Creighton was her uncle, and that she was the next of kin. May he not, then, have killed the old man, hoping to marry Dora and thus get the miser's wealth?'

"'Yes! She told me that he had tried to induce her to marry him, but that she could not do so because she didn't love him.'

"'That, then, would be considered a strong motive by some, particularly as it was evident that the murderer had tried to leave the impression behind that it was a case of suicide.'

"'Well, what shall I do?'

"'Arrest him, of course.'

"'And depend on such evidence as we have?'

"'Yes, unless you can find some more. Maybe there may turn up something between the arrest and trial that will aid us in the matter.'

"'Very well. I don't want to make a miss of it, though.'

"'No, of course not.'

"I went back to the boarding-house and waited for him to put in his appearance, during which time I tried to think of some way to scare him into a confession. He came in just before supper, and went up to his room. I waited until after supper to make my haul, thinking it would be the best time. We sat opposite each other at the table, and exchanged a few civilities. He finished his meal before I did mine, and went upstairs, as I thought. Three minutes later I went up, and found that he was gone."

(To be continued)

CURRENT NEWS

STOP BREAD LABELS WITH PRINCE'S PICTURE

A complaint has been forwarded to the Department of Justice that a local baker's labels of Jefferson City, Mo., bear the picture of Prince Henry of Prussia, a brother of the kaiser. The president of the company admitted that the label had been used for years on rye bread.

"I didn't know who Prince Henry was," he said. "It will not be used any more."

BOY AS MAIL

On its first trip from Cincinnati to Versailles the parcel post automobile truck carried a much alive thirteen-year-old boy weighing seventy-three pounds and wearing 78 cents in postage stamps, as one of its packages. The lad was tagged "Freddie Prinx, Versailles, Ind., care of the Postmaster." He remained overnight and was "posted" for his home next day by the postmaster, who stamped on his collar, "Fragile and perishable."

TRAVELED FAR TO ENLIST

John Campbell, the Mackenzie Indian who traveled the 3,000 miles between Fort Yukon and Vancouver to enlist in the Canadian Army, has a still greater distance to go before he makes acquaintance with the enemy in France. To cross the continent is 3,000 miles and then there is the smaller voyage of a couple of thousand miles on the Atlantic. The call to duty reaches far and is heard even in the solitudes of Canada's far north.

POPULATION OF THE CANAL ZONE

A census of the Canal Zone taken by the police and fire division as of June 30, 1918, shows a total civilian population of 21,707, which is a decrease of 1,588 as compared with the population a year ago. Of the total population 2,827 American men and 7,074 men of other nationalities (chiefly British West Indian negroes) are employed by the Panama Canal and Railroad. There are in the Canal Zone 5,776 American women and 2,040 American children and 3,073 women and 5,102 children of other nationalities. Of the 1,599 decrease in population, 757 are Americans and 831 of other nationalities.

SOME CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT COLD

Cold presents many odd facts. In the first place, water made by melting snow is very unwholesome and causes painful inflammation of the throat, palate and tongue.

Intense cold causes a dulling of the senses, taste and smell becoming almost nil. The lack of these two senses seems, however, to be a very kind and wise provision of nature to enable the traveler in the cold Arctic regions to eat all kinds of oily, disagreeable foods like blubber and fat, which are necessary as heat producers. The effect of cold on the eyes is very dangerous. It causes them first gradually to close and then to freeze tight.

Another curious fact about the cold of the Arctic regions is that when a person stops walking or working in any way whereby the feet get exercise, the sole of the foot loses all sense of feeling.

A POISONED SEA

For the eighth time since 1844 fish have been killed along the west coast of Florida in an area of poisoned water. Not only the water, but the air has been charged with a suffocating gas, odorless but irritating to the air passages, says *Popular Science Monthly*. The last mortality was reported in October and November of 1916. The Bureau of Fisheries sent experts to the spot, but they were obliged to admit, after a careful investigation, that the cause of the strange occurrence is a mystery. One explanation advanced is that earthquake shocks, possibly due to West Indian hurricanes, released poisonous gases from the sea-bottom.

SHOVEL GRAVEL

More than 125 business and professional men of Hot Springs, Ark., recently shoveled gravel from a gravel pit in the Saline River Bottom, spread gravel over the Little Rock Hot Springs highway, and contributed much assistance to the people of Saline County, who were devoting a holiday from business to the purposes of good roads.

Chancellor J. P. Henderson, City Commissioner; M. A. Eisle and other officials were in the party that went from here. Ex-County Judge Asher of Pulaski County came down and joined the County Judge of Saline County in witnessing the work of the army of volunteers. It was estimated that more than 500 loads of gravel were placed on the highway.

THINGS IN SCIENCE

Experiments by the United States Hydrographic Office have indicated that the depth to which an ocean wave causes a disturbance of the water is 350 times the wave's height.

It has been discovered by a French scientist that the colored spots which appear on the leaves of books are caused by microscopic fungi, which he has been able to transplant.

A shaving mirror patented by a Philadelphia inventor can be attached to a man's shoulders by harness that keeps it in front of him and always the same distance from his face.

Officials in the Philippines are investigating the possibility of obtaining large quantities of a high-grade lubricating oil from a vine that grows wild throughout the islands.

An attachment for hand ploughs has been invented which is intended to fit a man's body and enable him to add his weight to the force needed to push it through soil.

Tension members of a truss frame that supports a flat car of unusual capacity on a European railroad are formed of steel wire cables instead of the usual roads and bars.

To enable the operator of an old-style typewriter to watch its work as in a visible machine an inventor has patented a pair of mirrors to be mounted on it in the proper position.

WHEAT NOT A NECESSARY FOOD

Wheat is not necessary. We are accustomed to regard wheat as a more or less indispensable article of diet. It isn't. It is an article of luxury, and absolutely nothing else. Wheat possesses over oats, corn and rice absolutely no nutritional quality for man or beast. It has no more protein, and no better protein. It has no more fat, and no better fat. It has no mineral salt better or in larger amounts. It has no more fuel or better fuel. It is just one of the cereals, and there isn't the slightest evidence that it is the best one, because so far as comparative tests are concerned in animals, it isn't the best one; it is very far from the best one.—A. E. Taylor, M. D., U. S. Food Administrator.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

The aluminum pants button mystery has been solved. Soldier sleuths at Camp Lincoln, Mo., bored the secret out of a chastened artilleryman, who arrived at camp just three minutes before reveille.

Aluminum pants buttons, be it known, have been disappearing from the olive drab uniforms with persistent regularity. The quartermaster for weeks has been implored and beseeched, begged and threatened by desperate guardsmen, who demanded buttons to replace the nails, pieces of rope and safety pins used as substitutes. He wondered where the buttons were going. Recently the artilleryman confessed.

"Itsh thish way. Thesh pantsh buttons, after they are mashed, are just the size of a nickel. They 'zackly fit in schlot machines."

WHY DOES SALT MAKE US THIRSTY?

The blood in our body contains about the same proportion of salt as the water in the ocean normally. When the supply is normal we do not feel that we have too much salt in our system, but when you take salt into your mouth the percentage of salt in the body is increased, and the being thirsty, or the desire to drink water afterward, is caused by the demand of the human system that the salt be diluted. The system calls for water or something to drink in order that it may counteract the too great percentage of salt in the system. Other things also, when taken into the body in too great a proportion, cause us to become thirsty. Thirst is merely Nature's demand for more water on account of the necessity of reducing the percentage of some substance like salt, or merely a necessity for having more water in the body.

DREAMS FORETOLD DEATH

Members of the family of Victor V. Cassidy, Chief Deputy Fish and Game Warden for Southern Indiana, who was accidentally shot and killed recently, while hunting in Mississippi, by Harry de Turk of Martinsville, who mistook him for a deer, relate that they had dreams which foretold his death.

Some time before Cassidy left on the hunting trip his wife dreamed that she saw Cassidy's mother standing in a cemetery near her grave and heard her say to Cassidy: "Vick, I want you, and am coming after you soon."

The night before Cassidy left on the trip his daughter, Miss Marie Cassidy, who is a student at the University of Illinois, dreamed that she saw her father dead and in a coffin. On his way to the station to leave for the South, Cassidy told his brother, Patrick, that he expected never again to see the latter's son, who is in France.

UNIFORMS FOR CAPTURED U. S. OFFICERS

Headquarters of the American Red Cross announces that it has established a tailor shop at Berne Switzerland, to supply uniforms to American Army and Navy officers who have been captured, and who often reach German prison camps after having lost their clothing and shoes. Their shoes, it is said, are often taken from them by their captors and they are forced to wear wooden shoes. The stripping of prisoners, the Red Cross statement adds, apparently takes place only at the front, in the heat and confusion of battle. At the prison camps committees appointed by the prisoners themselves see that Americans receive supplies sent them.

MOVING STONES

There is a curiosity in Long Pond, Cumberland County, Me., which has often afforded matter of speculation.

On the easterly side of the pond is a cove which extends about 100 rods farther east than the general course of the shore, says the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. The bottom is clary, and so shoal that a man may wade 50 rods into the pond. At the bottom of this cove are stones of various circumferences, having an annual motion toward the shore. The proof of this is the mark or track left behind them, and the bodies of clay driven up before them.

Some of these stones are two or three tons weight, and have left a track of several rods behind them, having at least a common cartload of clay before them. The shore of the cove is lined with these stones, which, it would seem, have crawled out of the water.

METZ, FORTRESS OF MANY SIEGES

Metz, the strongest fortified city in Germany, which is now threatened by Americans, existed as a fortress in Cæsar's reign, and in all its history is only known to have surrendered to an enemy once—to the German Army in 1870—is being besieged by General Pershing. Its fall is expected in a short time.

Metz is the capital of German Lorraine and is situated on the Moselle River. The city is entered by ten gates. The fortress is protected by the largest of Krupp guns, which were installed after its capture in 1870 by the Germans.

The region where Metz is situated was called Gaul in the time of the Roman emperors. Cæsar often remarked that it was one of the oldest and most important towns of Gaul. He saw its great strategical importance and fortified it. After Attila plundered Metz it went into the hands of the Franks, and from them it slid into the hands of the French.

Shortly after the French occupied the fortress it was defended against Charles V., by Francis of Guise, Napoleon III. wanted it made the strongest fortress in Europe and strengthened it by a circle of detached forts, but was not completed until by the Germans in 1870. When Germany was preparing for war with France after the Franco-Prussian War she saw that Metz would probably be the first city the French would attack, so she constructed a new chain of defenses outside of the city.

Metz is a city of famous churches and cathedrals, many of the Gothic style. Although the city was modernized by the French and Germans, it still possesses its picturesque scenes of Gaul. Many of the bridges and streets running by are the same as in the days of the Carolinian rulers.

When Metz showed its strength and fidelity years ago it was christened the name "La Pucelle."

REPEATING BASTIAN'S EXPERIMENTS TO PRODUCE LIFE

Much was heard some years ago of various experiments by which the late Dr. Charlton Bastian, in England, claimed to have produced living organisms from non-living matter. In a paper lately presented to the Royal Society Mr. H. Onslow tells how he repeated the experiments by which Bastian claimed to have synthesized certain symmetrical bodies, resembling Torulæ and other minute organisms, from sterilized colloidal silica solutions which had been exposed for a long period to light, these organisms being capable of reproducing themselves. Although Mr. Onslow used the special samples of sodium silicate reserved for and recommended by Dr. Bastian and followed the latter's directions in every detail, the results indicate that the methods employed yield tubes which are absolutely sterile for all periods up to three years.

A WINTER EXPERIMENT

When there is snow on the ground, it is easy, by means of a simple experiment, to demonstrate the extent to which materials of different colors absorb the rays of the sun.

Take several small squares of cloth of various tints, says a writer in St. Nicholas. These might be black, red, light-blue, white and yellow. When the sun is shining brightly, place these bits of stuff on a level patch of snow where the rays can strike them.

Leave them in this position for a few hours, and then see what has happened. You will find that, according to the amount of heat absorbed, so will the material have melted its way down into the snow. Thus the black cloth will have gone down the farthest of all, so deeply, indeed, that it will be out of reach of the rays of the low winter sun. The red and yellow cloths will have sunk down also, but not nearly to the same extent. The light-blue will have only gone a little way below the surface, while the white will be still on the top, quite unaffected by the sun's rays, having absorbed virtually no heat.

RECOVERING THE OCEAN'S TREASURES

Ever since the day when wind and sea swallowed up the first frail vessels in which our most remote ancestors put out from the shore, billions of dollars in gold, diamonds and precious metals have been accumulating on the ocean's bottom. Especially to-day, since the launching of Germany's submarine campaign, fortunes incalculably great have disappeared into the depths of the sea. The question was how to recover this fabulous wealth, so easily located, yet so difficult to secure. But now comes the announcement of the Ehinger Non-Collapsible Buoyancy Tank, of which a writer in *The Marine Age* says:

"The device is a tank made of sheet steel only three-eighths of an inch thick. This tank absolutely will not collapse under any pressure, no matter how far below the surface it may be sunk. The water pressure on the outside of the tank is equalized by the air pressure within. When attached to a sunken ship the Ehinger tanks will positively raise the wreck to the surface and support it while being towed to the port or until everything of value is removed and transferred to another ship.

"It is planned to manufacture non-collapsible buoyancy tanks, and to begin bringing back these sunken treasures. Competent authorities in maritime disasters state the average depth of sunken ships to be but 200 feet. Ehinger tanks operate to a depth of 300 feet.'

EGYPT'S SACRED CATS

A question frequently asked but never satisfactorily answered is whether the human race is more utilitarian to-day than it was some thousands of years ago.

Men have been traders ever since they learned how to shake hands. The task of earning a living has never been easy for the majority. The past has not appeared to be a period of light labor, but most people look upon any period in the past as less devoted to the spirit of gain than the present.

And at last the truth of that view is demonstrated. Not long ago, according to a writer in the *Journal of Heredity*, several hundred thousand cat mummies were found in Egypt. Each mummy was as carefully embalmed as if it had been a human being instead of a cat. Here was evidence that the worshipers of the great Egyptian cat goddess, Pasht, devoted more than one hour a week to religion. Part of the time they cultivated the banks of the Nile, and the rest of the time they embalmed sacred cats.

But what did the modern inhabitants of Egypt do when they discovered this mummy menagerie! They sold the cats for fertilizer at $15 a ton. Think of it! Fifteen dollars a ton for the sacred cats of Pasht! It is a sacrilege, but it is typical of a world whose boots are blacked by the lineal descendants of Homer.

TOBACCO AND TUBERCULOSIS

A recent statistical inquiry published by authority of the Surgeon-General of the Army on the effect of cigarette smoking upon the lungs is of great importance. Major Webb has found from observation of several hundred thousand soldiers that comparatively few non-smokers (27 per cent.) show signs of chronic bronchial irritation; most smokers, on the other hand, and all cigarette inhalers, show such signs. Tobacco smoking has an inflammatory effect upon the throat.

However, the proportion of men discharged for tuberculosis was no higher among the smokers than among the non-smokers. The inhalation of tobacco smoke, apparently, does not cause or aid tuberculosis. It comes as something of a novelty to find that tobacco smokers with inflamed throats do not show more tuberculosis than non-smokers with normal throats. It is now thought that inflamed tissues do not always provide a favorable field for bacterial growth, as has been the doctrine, but, being the resistance of the tissue to irritation, the inflamed tissue in some cases confronts bacteria as an embattled enemy.

SEEING BY EAR

There is a machine, the invention of Fournier Dalbe, a French scientist, whereby blind persons are enabled to read an ordinary printed page of a book or a newspaper. The different letters are distinguished by the reader through a telephone receiver, which is attached to a little instrument that may be moved at will over the printed page.

The vital principle made use of in the construction of the instrument is the peculiar property of the metal selenium in strengthening or diminishing an electric current passing through it, according to the amount of light to which it is exposed.

The delicate adjustment of Professor Dalbe's device allows of an easy differentiation of letters by the varying sounds in the telephone receiver as the detector is moved across a brightly-illuminated page. Very little practice, it is said, is necessary for proficiency in the use of the instrument, which is known as the "type reading octophone."

SALT FISH PETRIFIED

A petrified fish, presumably a sheepshead, dug from the limestone quarry at Glennon, Ala., has been exhibited in Mobile, Ala. The rock containing the fish was found following a blast. As the sheepshead is a salt water fish fishermen are wondering how this one happened to be so far from salt water—about sixty miles.

EAT WILD BURROS TO BE RID OF THEM

Wild burros have become a pest in some parts of Arizona. The little, long-eared animals are not exactly wild, for the reason that they do not have enough energy and spirit to be that way; they are a good deal like the bears of Yellowstone Park. The mountain valleys of not only Arizona but of New Mexico and Northern Mexico are overflowing with droves of burros. They infest the mining camps and ranches and are a nuisance. Hundreds of them are killed for their hides and grease.

It has been suggested by Dr. C. C. Young, a noted Russion traveler and Warakul sheep breeder, who has lived in the Southwest for several years, that the wild burros be utilized as a source of meat supply for the people of this part of the country.

Doctor Young says that he has eaten the flesh of camels and various breeds of sheep and that they do not compare with burro meat.

"As far as the meat of the young burro is concerned, I can only state that I have eaten it for months and like it," he said.

"A fat burro about one year old furnishes a steak that will satisfy the taste of the most fastidious epicure."

WOMEN BRICKMAKERS NOW

"Women are to-day working as longshoremen, as navvies barrowing coke, as railway porters, as postal employees and elevator operators, as brick settlers' laborers, attenders in roller mills, workers in seventy-eight processes in grain milling, in fifty-three processes in paper making, in twenty-four processes in furniture making, in boiler making, laboratory work, optical work, aeroplane building, in dyeing, bleaching and printing cotton, in woollen and velvet goods, in making brick, glazed and unglazed ware, stoneware, tiles, glass, leather goods and linoleum," says Mabel Potter Daggett.

"In the engineering trade women have mastered already five hundred processes, three-fourths of which had never known the touch of a woman's hand before the war. 'I consider myself a first-class workman at my trade. It took me seven years to learn it,' said a foreman to me through the crashing noise of the machines among which we stood, 'but,' and he waved his hand over his domain in which 1,700 women were at work, 'these women, at occupations requiring speed and dexterity, already excel me.'

"He led me to the side of a girl who was drilling holes in brass. 'See,' he said, 'she does 1,000 holes at 50 centimes an hour. No man we were ever able to employ ever did more than 500 holes an hour, and we had to pay him 75 centimes.'"

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," published semi-monthly at New York N. Y., for October 1, 1918. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me, a Commissioner of Deeds in and for the city and county aforesaid, personally appeared Luis Senarens, who having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication, for the date shown in the above captain, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443 Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher—Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Editor—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor—None. Business Manager—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Harry E. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; N. Hastings Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and condition under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona-fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

LUIS SENARENS, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23d day of September, 1918.—Charles Warren Hastings. (My Commission expires January 30, 1919.)

HELP WIN THE WAR

The North Dakota State Council of Defense is solving two problems—the food problem and the surplus labor problem—by putting workmen on unused farms in order to stimulate crop production in the Northwest. The owners of the farms are paid a percentage of the returns as rent. Large tracts in North Dakota were unused, and in order that the State might be made as productive as possible the Council of Defense decided to put them into service.

Sixty-five young women are undertaking a unique means of proving their value to the country, by beginning a highly specialized type of war work that will eventually mean much to the labor power of the Training School for Psychiatric Social Work at Smith College, Northampton, Mass., and are styled "shell-shock experts." They will go immediately to clinics in New York, Boston and other cities to begin six months' practical work with nervous patients. They will undertake the economic and physical reconstruction of shell-shock victims, with the idea of making these unfortunate men fit once more for places in industry. It is estimated that eventually 2,000 psychiatric aides can be used to advantage in this work. The Department of Labor is co-operating with the War Department and the Federal Board for Vocational Education in the rehabilitation of disabled soldiers.

At the New York School of Instruction for Women Ticket Agents a two months' course of instruction is offered. Students are paid $25 a month and when qualified for positions they command salaries ranging from $75 to $150 a month, according to efficiency. Applicants must be between the ages of 21 and 35 years, must have a high school education or its equivalent, and to accept positions either in New York City or a nearby suburb. Applications may be sent to the Joint Commitee on All Passenger Agencies in Official Classification Territory, 90 West street, New York City.

Folding DOUBLE X-RAY

With this Double X-RAY you can apparently see thru cloth or wood. See bones in the body, makes the flesh look transparent. A optical illusion. By mail 10 cts. three for 25 cts. Postpaid
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We need agents and have a big money making proposition for you. You can do it as hundreds of plucky men and women are doing by creating your own trade, selling Ho-Ro-Co Medicated Skin and Scalp Soap, Toilet Articles, Perfumes, Extracts, Spices and Household Specialties. Splendid profits, increasing monthly. No experience required. Write us now for samples and full particulars.

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$1.00 PANTS MADE TO MEASURE

Not $1.00, not even 50c, not one cent cost to you under our easy conditions. No extra charges for fancy styles, belt loops, golf bottoms, pearl buttons, all FREE. Before you buy a suit or pants, before you take another order, get our free samples and wonderful new offer. All other Agents write too. Ask for the big, new different tailoring deal. Costs nothing, write today. Address

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PATENTED
Durable, Reliable and Perfectly Safe to carry without danger of leakage.
VALUABLE FOR MOTORCYCLISTS AUTOMOBILISTS, HUNTSMEN, CONFIRMED LADIES, CASHIERS, HOMES, ETC.

5 INCHES LONG
Substantially made
NOT A LEAD PRODUCT
NOT A TOY

Fires and recharges by pulling the trigger.—Reloading Unlimited.

WILL STOP THE MOST VICIOUS DOG (OR MAN) WITHOUT PERMANENT INJURY.

BOYS Have great fun with the WIZARD PISTOL. For sniping dogs, cats, hooligans, slackers, lazybones—and for having a lot of fun with JOKES. The Wizard Pistol is harmless, although it certainly does puzzle and worry the one that is hit. We have seen one boy frighten away a whole crowd of rough-necks by using one of these Wizard Pistols. Price, postpaid, 60 cents; two for $1.00. Sent anywhere. Enclose stamps or cash.

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NEW DOUBLE ACTION BABY HAMMERLESS REVOLVER

Smallest, Neatest Practical Revolver made. Accidental discharges impossible, thumb, fingers, children firing. When you need a pistol you need it bad and quick, as every second counts. Every lady and automobilist should have one; there is no better or safer made.

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Send free trial of your method to:

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You Never Saw a Bald Indian

You see a great many men—all ages—who are losing their hair. Some are bald already. You see women, too, whose hair is thin.

But you never saw a bald Indian!

Let me tell you why.

When I was almost bald, my travels brought me in contact with an old medicine man of the Cherokee tribe in the Indian Territory.

This venerable sage, highly respected among the Cherokees for his mysterious knowledge, told me that he could put something upon my scalp to make the hair grow.

Although lacking in faith, I permitted him to make the test. He rubbed a little ointment from a stone jar upon my head. He gave me some of this peculiar pomade and told me to put some on, twice daily.

To my extreme pleasure, a light down soon appeared upon the bald part and this developed gradually into a growth of hair. The hair grew steadily. I was soon able to brush it—then to comb it.

Never has my hair ceased growing healthily since the old Cherokee servant gave me that ointment. I am 66 years old and go to the barber's for a hair cut each month.

From the Indian wizard I obtained the recipe for this cosmetic and had it modernized by an expert chemist so that a druggist can supply it.

If you have dandruff, or if your hair is becoming thin, or is falling out, or if you are bald, you had better try this wonderful ointment and I shall be pleased to mail you the recipe free of cost if you write to me. Tell this to your friends—men and women. My address is: John Hart Brittain, BH-101, 150 East Thirty-second St., New York City. If you would like a proof box of the ointment, enclose 25 cents, silver or stamps.

Now you understand why you see no bald Indians. They know what to do to keep a good hair growth.

VENTRILOQUISM

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5 MAGAZINES

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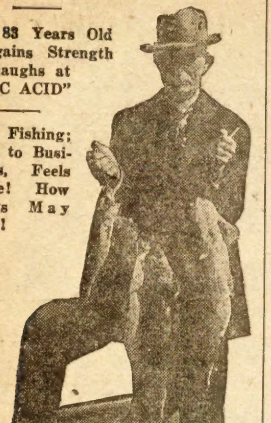
Finds Cure For Rheumatism After Suffering 50 Years

Now 83 Years Old —Regains Strength and laughs at "URIC ACID"

Goes Fishing; Back to Business, Feels Fine! How Others May Do It!



"I am eighty-three years old and I doctored for rheumatism ever since I came out of the army over fifty years ago. Like many others, I spent money freely for so-called 'cures,' and I have read about 'Uric Acid' until I could almost taste it. I could not sleep nights or walk without pain; my hands were so sore and stiff I could not hold a pen. But now I am again in active business and can walk with ease or write all day with comfort. Friends are surprised at the change."

HOW IT HAPPENED.

Mr. Asheiman is only one of thousands who suffered for years, owing to the general belief in the old, false theory that "Uric Acid" causes rheumatism. This erroneous belief induced him and legions of unfortunate men and women to take wrong treatments. You might just as well attempt to put out a fire with oil as to try and get rid of your rheumatism, neuritis and like complaints, by taking treatment supposed to drive Uric Acid out of your blood and body. Many physicians and scientists now know that Uric Acid never did, never can and never will cause rheumatism; that it is a natural and necessary constituent of the blood; that it is found in every new-born babe, and that without it we could not live!

HOW OTHERS MAY BENEFIT FROM A GENEROUS GIFT.

These statements may seem strange to some folks, because nearly all sufferers have all along been led to believe in the old "Uric Acid" humbug. It took Mr. Asheiman fifty years to find out this truth. He learned how to get rid of the true cause of his rheumatism, other disorders and recover his strength from "The Inner Mysteries," a remarkable book that is now being distributed free by an authority who devoted over twenty years to the scientific study of this particular trouble. If any reader of the "Mystery Magazine" wishes a copy of this book that reveals startling facts overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past, simply send a post-card or letter to E. P. Clearwater 534-A Water street, Hallowell, Maine, and it will be sent by return mail without any charge whatever. Send now. You may never get this opportunity again. If not a sufferer yourself, hand this good news to some friend who may be afflicted.

LITTLE ADS

Write to Scott & Scott, Inc., Advertising Offices, 144 East 32nd Street, New York City, or 29 East Madison Street, Chicago, for particulars about advertising in this magazine.

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FORDS START EASY IN COLD WEATHER with our new 1919 carburetors; 34 miles per gallon. Use cheapest gasoline or half kerosene. Increased power. Styles for any motor. Very slow on high. Attach it yourself. Big profits to agents. Money-back guarantee. 30 days' trial. Air-Friction Carburetor Company, 172 Madison St., Dayton, Ohio.

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MEET YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. New developments. Make efficiency count. Our wonder working Salesmanship and Efficiency course helped 25,000 last year to better their positions. It will help you. Write to-day. Knox School of Salesmanship and Business Efficiency, Engineers Bldg., Cleveland, O.

BE A DETECTIVE. Opportunity for men and women for Secret Investigation. Write C. T. Ludwig, 521 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

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THE OOLOGIST IS THE ONLY PUBLICATION in America devoted to the interest of those making collections of eggs of North American birds. Its columns are filled with advertisements from parties desiring to exchange such specimens, also each issue contains many interesting articles and notes on the birds that the Boy Scout sees in his tramps and camps in the woods. Subscription 50 cts. per year. Sample copy free. Address Ologist, Lacon, Ill.

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GAIN 5 per cent. and other profits by small investment; pay in at easy convenience. Start on road to wealth. Wonderful opportunity. Write for particulars. Liberty Hog and Sheep Association, 216 So. LaSalle St., Chicago.

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REDUCE WEIGHT HAPPILY. If you are too fat, send for interesting book telling the best way to become slender, healthier and beautiful. Sent in plain envelope. Hygienic Company, N-501, Sta. F, New York.

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THOUSANDS MEN-WOMEN, 18 or over, wanted immediately. U. S. Government war positions, $100 month. Easy clerical work. Write immediately for free list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dept. P 155, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200, colored porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 881 By. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ill.

HELP WANTED—Continued

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200 monthly. Colored Porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 881 By. Bureau, E. St. Louis, Ill.

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PRESIDENTIAL PUZZLE. Most fascinating, instructive and interesting; complete in neat box. 25 cents, postpaid. O. S. Michel, Box 293, Newark, N. J.

SELL "PERSHING IN FRANCE." Great war picture. Big patriotic hit. Make $10 daily. Regular 25 cents. Sample only 10 cents, prepaid. Send now. Address: Publisher School News, New Egypt, N. J.

WHEN DO FISH BITE BEST? The Old Fisherman's Calendar tells when. Go on the right days. Send 25 cts. to-day to O. F. Calendar, Box 946 H, Sta. Springfield, Mass.

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POWERINE IS EQUAL TO GASOLINE AT 5 cts. a gallon. Salesmen and agents wanted. Exclusive territory granted. Powerine is guaranteed to be harmless, to remove and prevent carbon, doubling the life of all gasoline motors, saving repairs, adding snap, speed and power. An amount equal to 20 gallons of gasoline will be sent to any address in the U. S., charges prepaid, for $1. W. Porter Barnes, Dept. 10, Santa Rosa, Cal.

DEN PICTURES. Real photos from life. Fascinating Artist Models' poses. Sample "Bathing Girl" and catalog, 10 cents. Simpson Co., Wheeling, W. Va.

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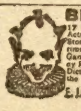

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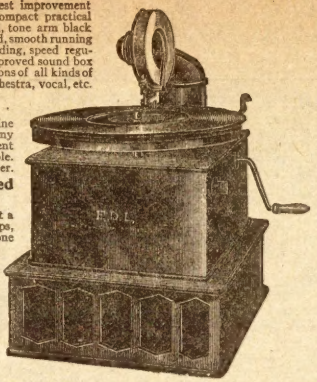
Here is our New Style E. D. L. Phonograph—the latest improvement—without the horn. The lightest, most durable and compact practical phonograph ever produced. It is beautifully finished, tone arm black japanned, nickel winding crank, accurately constructed, smooth running spring motor, which plays 2 to 3 records at one winding, speed regulator, stop lever and felt-covered turn table. New improved sound box with mica diaphragm, which make perfect reproductions of all kinds of music—band pieces, talking pieces, instrumental, orchestra, vocal, etc.



Plays Any Disc Record

Up to 7 inches, and plays them properly. This machine is simply wonderful—not to be compared with any other of this kind. Will give you more entertainment than anything you ever owned. Strong and durable. Small and compact with no parts to get out of order.

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Just your name and we will send you 24 of our Art Pictures to dispose of on special offer at 25c each. Send us the $6 you collect and for your trouble we will send this new improved E. D. L. Phonograph and a selection of 6 records, free for your trouble. You can dispose of pictures and earn this great machine and the records in a few hours' time.

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No more worry about your over-stoutness. Take **Oil of Korein,** follow the simple, health-improving Korein system and it is positively guaranteed you will **lose 10 to 60 pounds or even more**—whatever amount of superfluous fat you need to be rid of—or this self treatment will *cost you nothing.* We offer **$100.00 Cash Guarantee!** It is in every box.

Measure and weigh yourself now; watch the delightful steady reduction. Become healthier, younger in appearance, more active and attractive; gain real beauty.

This method is also **guaranteed** to be perfectly harmless. Oil of Korein is not a laxative; contains no thyroid—but is a vegetalized oil containing genuine *fucus vesiculosus,* an ingredient obtained from certain seaweeds. Those who follow Korein system are **astonished** at the reduction—after all else fails. *Recommended by physicians.*

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A prominent Philadelphian, George Reynolds, Walton Avenue, lost 20 lbs. the first month and continued using Oil of Korein, massaging himself daily, until he **reduced 64 lbs.** Mrs. J. B. Hansen, Plattsville, **reduced 20 lbs. in less than 2 months.** Mrs. L. C. Patrick, Niland, wanted to reduce 8 lbs. and **did so in two weeks.** Miss Ray **lost 69 lbs.** An Albany business man, F. G. Drew, **lost 56 lbs. in 3 months.** Many say "fat seems to melt away," or "measurements decrease like magic," etc. Legions of voluntary testimonials.

Don't carry the tedious burden of unhealthy fat. Become **slender** and attractive by this superior easy method. Amaze yourself and friends. Increase your efficiency!

Oil of Korein comes in capsules, easy to take. **Buy a small box at any busy pharmacy;** or the druggist will get it for you. Or, write us and we will mail you a box in plain wrapper, which **you may pay for when it comes to you.** Begin reducing now! *Become thin and stay so!*

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PRICE 12c. SILVER ONLY. **BIG FUN BOYS** You apparently see thru Clothes, Wood, Stone, any object. See Bones in Flesh. A magic trick novelty FREE with each X Ray.
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or other fat 2 to 4 inches in three weeks with 1 jar of COSI Obesity Cream; external, harmless; no massage. For men and women, sample, 10 cents. Address
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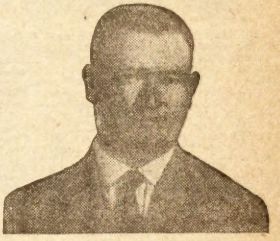
He Quit Cigarettes

Gained Over 30 Pounds



Mr. Ferguson's Experience

"I smoked cigarettes ever since a boy. From six to eight sacks of tobacco, I used weekly.

"**They were doing me great harm.** I became so nervous that I couldn't sleep until I smoked. Each morning I had an awful taste in my mouth.

"**Several times I tried to quit by will-power,** but it just seemed that I would go wild if I couldn't have cigarettes.

"I had almost given up hope of ever quitting until one day I sent for a book that told me what to do. After learning the way, I quit easily in 3 days and haven't touched a cigarette in years. I have gained over 30 pounds and cannot praise the method too highly. I say to every cigarette smoker—if you can't quit without help let Mr. Woods help you quit quickly and happily."—so says Mr. S. H. Ferguson of Crumps Park.

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